

1948

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### Recommended Citation

Leo Alexander, War Crimes and Their Motivation: The Socio-Psychological Structure of the SS and the Criminalization of a Society, 39 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 298 (1948-1949)

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## WAR CRIMES AND THEIR MOTIVATION

### The Socio-Psychological Structure of the SS and the Criminalization of a Society

Leo Alexander

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The following article was read in part at the 75th anniversary meeting of the *Nederlandsche Vereniging voor Psychiatrie en Neurologie*, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, on 12 June 1947, at the meeting of the Boston Society of Psychiatry and Neurology on 16 October 1947, at the First American Medicolegal Congress, in St. Louis, Missouri, on 20 January 1948, and at the meeting of the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society, in Boston, on 29 January 1948.—EDITOR.

#### Introduction

War Crimes are crimes committed with group approval. In this way they are similar to gang crimes, and different from crimes committed by single individuals in ordinary society. The main approving and instigating group in Germany during the Nazi regime was the SS which was the most important political organization in Nazi Germany.

SS stands for Schutz-Staffel, which, translated, means "protective squadron." No totalitarian state can function without an SS-like organization. It is therefore important for us to know all we can about the SS, to understand its motivation and how it worked, what its strength was and what its weaknesses were; and it is the duty of sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists to study these facts and to make them generally understood.

The Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes in Nurnberg, founded by Justice Robert H. Jackson and continued and developed further by General Telford Taylor, has provided many new and challenging opportunities. Among these opportunities, unique in history, is the opportunity for a scientific postmortem of the body politic of the defeated enemy. The material is enormous. Documents abound in the archives, significant books in the libraries. Vast numbers of the participants, active and passive, in the life of this totalitarian state are available for examination in the prison, the witness house, and on the streets, railroad trains and farms of Germany.

A number of studies concerning the leading participants, especially the 22 men who stood trial before the International Military Tribunal, have already appeared in print, notably the

books by Kelley and Gilbert. But before the International Military Tribunal not only specific individuals were tried, but also organizations composed of large groups of partly nameless men, notably the SS. In the subsequent trials before the Nurnberg Military Tribunals composed entirely of American judges, the emphasis has shifted even more to the investigation and trial of members of organizations declared criminal by the International Tribunal, of which the most important, far-flung, and powerful was the SS.

In its days of power and activity the Nazi State liked to compare itself with a racing train in motion. While men stood at the throttle, the engine which drove Nazi Germany was the SS. It is therefore important to understand the SS and the sociologic and psychologic forces which created it, held it together, and made possible its defeat. This is not only of historical and academic interest. Totalitarianism has not been eliminated as a threat, external and internal, with the defeat of Nazi Germany. By understanding the SS in the socio-psychologic setting of Germany we may be able to draw general conclusions in regard to the dynamics of totalitarian rule anywhere, and in regard to the socio-psychologic structure of any country under such rule. More specifically, it will aid us in the re-education, the socio-psychologic rehabilitation of defeated and occupied Germany.

### *The SS as a Criminal Organization*

The SS was found to be a criminal organization by the International Military Tribunal in Nurnberg. In order to understand the SS it is necessary to realize thoroughly and to understand the meaning of this finding, and not merely to accept the dictum of the Military Tribunal. This organization was criminal not only because its members actually committed crimes but also because the essential mode of its thinking and its group behavior was that prevalent in criminal organizations. The individual criminal as well as the criminal organization commits crimes for the purpose of gaining selfish ends by criminal means. But in addition the criminal organization also commits crimes for the purpose of maintaining and enforcing the continued adherence and group loyalty of its members since it is vital to the criminal organization to insure against desertion by its members. This additional purpose becomes increasingly important as the organization increases in numbers. It is achieved by involving all members in sufficient criminal activity to cut off their return to normal society.

In addition, such criminal societies will continuously search

for and recruit outside accomplices in order to enlarge the circle of people that will stand together, part-time members as it were, who are tied to the organization by being allowed to profit from the society's crimes, without being completely involved. Such accomplices are chosen particularly among people of political, civic, social, or other public influence, so-called "front" men, who are corrupted and made agreeable to the ends of the criminal organization, but who are pushed into complete or overt participation only if and when their loyalty is questioned for some reason or other. This is the basic pattern of all criminal organizations such as the Mafia and Camorra in Italy and the well-known criminal gangs of outlaws which have cropped up time and again in the United States but which have been successfully held down by the constructive forces of society. Germany was not so fortunate, and a criminal gang actually gained power over essential phases of government. This gang constituted the SS. Its nondrafted members were held together by the same sort of ties that bind together members of criminal gangs. In the SS as in all criminal organizations there existed that inclined plane where nobody could stay at the brink for long, but all had to roll down into more crime, or be killed or eliminated. We understand these ties very well because we have studied them and legally dissected them, as it were, in many gang trials in the United States, and we are now continuing the same process in studying the SS.

We know that in the SS, as in any other criminal organization, if a man did anything which put his loyalty to that organization into a questionable light, he was either liquidated—that means killed—or he had to undertake a criminal act which would definitely and irrevocably tie him to that criminal organization. We say in such a case the man was put "on the spot." Such an act must include murder, according to the age-old custom of criminal gangs. In the SS this was specifically called *blutkitt* (blood cement). I first learned of the existence of this special German term from Dr. Wanda von Baeyer, a German psychologist, who also told me that Hitler himself introduced the idea and the word *blutkitt*, which he had discovered in a book about Genghis Khan in which it was emphasized that the crimes which the Khan's hordes committed served as "blood cement" ("blutkitt"), holding the organization together. He was supposed to have read that book as early as his Landsberg Prison days.

The concentration camps were the main places within the confines of Germany where SS members were expected to acquire blood cement, until they were considered reliable enough to be sent abroad into the occupied countries where they could then

be relied upon to perform similar crimes inside and outside the confines of specific camp areas.

The peculiar process of indoctrination in crime and cruelty which young men went through in concentration camps after they had joined the SS constituted the "hardening process," the "brutalization course" which the SS organization regarded as essential for transforming its personnel into willing and reliable tools for its criminal purposes. While many joined willingly, no doubt others were seduced by a double appeal—one in the form of a rationalization that this was for the best interests of Germany (actually for the interests of the SS), and the other in terms of a far more sinister and direct process of seduction, that of letting the novices taste the satisfactions obtained from release of repressed destructive primitive and sadistic drives.

The similarity of the SS to the classical criminal organizations is also expressed in other circumstances. As in all criminal societies there were "front" men, "inner circle" men, and "behind the scenes" men. The SS, like a really large-scale criminal gang, ran, as it were, on several tracks which sometimes were shielded from each other by tunnels. One has to understand the SS running on at least three tracks beside and around each other. The men recently on trial were mostly the "inner circle" men. The "front" men were sometimes not pushed into actual criminal activity unless they had come under suspicion of disloyalty in word or deed as in the case of Dr. Karl Gebhardt, one of those convicted in the medical case, in the matter of Heydrich's death, or if they had shown an inclination to dissociate themselves from the group or to sever ties with the SS.

Gebhardt was a well-known specialist in bone and joint surgery, Professor of Surgery at the University of Berlin, and Surgeon-in-Chief of the noted and renowned Hohenlychen Hospital, which had been the official hospital designated for the treatment of injuries sustained during the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936. He held general's rank in the SS.

Gebhardt was in just such a spot, as he himself said on the stand (p. 4051 of the German transcript). Gebhardt was suspected of having contributed to the death of Heydrich, who was under his care after his injury, by failing to treat his wound infection with sulfonamides, and this omission could definitely be interpreted as an act which would make him politically suspect in SS circles. Gebhardt was then expected, and was ready, to commit a criminal act which would definitely tie him into deeper union with the criminal organization, namely the SS. This act, in his case, was the criminal experiments which he then carried out on young girls captured from the Polish resistance

movement, in whom he produced wounds complicated by tissue destruction which he subsequently infected with gas gangrene bacilli, and then demonstrated that a number of these victims died in spite of sulfonamide treatment. Thus he proved that Heydrich's death was "fate determined" (a favorite SS phrase), and that he was not guilty of causing Heydrich's death. He went one step further by involving the entire German medical profession in "SS blood cement," by presenting his report before a national medical meeting without objection being aroused by any of its members.

The same motivation can also be recognized in the progressive criminal involvement of members of the inner circle. An example of this type is that of Viktor Hermann Brack, member of the Nazi Party and the SS since 1929, who held the rather low serial number of 901 in the SS. Having been Bouhler's personal assistant since 1932, he became in 1934 Bouhler's Chief of Staff at the Chancellory Office of the National Socialist Party. In this capacity he participated in three major crimes: 1) the killing of "useless eaters," including patients suffering from nervous or mental diseases in German state hospitals; 2) the experimental, administrative, and technical preparations for mass sterilizations of unwanted national and racial groups; and 3) the administrative and technical arrangements for the mass killing of unwanted national and racial groups, for which he suggested and introduced the use of camouflaged gas chambers, which became known as "Brack's remedy." This program was to begin with the extermination of seven to eight million Jews. The killing of the Jews was to be the preliminary phase to the killing of 30 million Slavs, in just the same way as the killing of the insane was the preliminary phase to the killing of the Jews.

The personality and motivations of this man who held the position of key executive in the main genocidal crime of the German State are of great interest in connection with our subject. It was surprising to find that he was a rather meek and polite, decidedly unimpressive individual who claimed that he had been living in mortal fear of Reinhard ("The Hangman") Heydrich for several years, ever since he first started having difficulties with him in 1937. These difficulties arose from the fact that Brack, in his capacity as Chief of the Chancellory Office, handled many petitions addressed to Hitler and took particular pains in investigating petitions appealing for discharge from concentration camps. Brack's interest in such petitions was considered inordinate and an interference in their spheres and policies by Heydrich, Bormann, and Himmler.

In the following two years this matter came to a head, the

culminating point being an incident in the course of which Heydrich accused Brack of divulging the contents of secret Gestapo (SD) files to the relatives of a petitioner who was in a concentration camp. Himmler and Bormann complained to Bouhler about Brack, demanded Brack's removal from office; and Heydrich, by whom Brack had felt personally threatened for some time, openly threatened him with arrest. It was at that point that Brack was picked by his chief Bouhler, also an old SS member, to take charge of the technical preparations for the extermination program of the insane which got underway in the latter part of 1939, and it was Brack who was taken by Bouhler, Conti, and Brandt to the first demonstration of a group killing of mental patients in December 1939. His, later, was the duty to make repeated checks at the various killing centers where he had to witness these killings in order to report on the efficacy of the various types of poison gas used. The choice at that time fell upon carbon monoxide which was later to be replaced by "Cyclone B."

Early in 1941, however, Brack once more aroused some displeasure in high SS circles by again taking up occasional cases of political persecutees. In that period he had intervened, notably and unsuccessfully, in the case of a Dr. Ludwig Schmitt who had given assistance to various persecuted socialists as well as to Otto Strasser and his group, and who was at that time imprisoned in a concentration camp, and also in the case of a high-ranking racial persecutee, Professor Otto Warburg the Nobel Prize winner, who was threatened with dismissal from the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute and whose dismissal Brack prevented. Furthermore, Brack had been critical of certain aspects of the "winter catastrophe" in Russia, especially of the fact that the armed forces had not coped with the problem of adequate care for the sick and the wounded particularly the sick and wounded SS men in that campaign. Chiefly because of his activity in behalf of Schmitt and Warburg, Brack was called to Gestapo headquarters where Heydrich gave him a stern warning. Again shortly after that, in March 1941, it happened that Himmler entrusted him first with working out plans for mass sterilization of conquered peoples, and subsequently, in September 1941, with the preparations for the mass extermination of the Jews.

Brack's involvement is of great interest, and I have the impression that Brack himself was quite unaware of this blood-cement connection in the setting of the conversation in which Himmler first informed Brack of his plans and of the role he, Brack, was to play in the extermination of the Jews. Brack told the story on the stand (pp. 7507 and 7508 of the English tran-

script). He stated that he had gone to Himmler to tell him about the shortcomings of the motor transport problem and how it affected the care of the sick and the wounded and what catastrophes had resulted from the lack of motor vehicles. He continued:

I reported these matters to Himmler but subsequently, I don't know why, I voiced my criticism about other matters within the SS. Himmler quietly listened to me but then tried to convince me in his way about the correctness of what he was doing. He admitted that some things in the SS were not as he would like them to be, and that some of the men in the SS did not quite fit into the organization. But, he said, at this critical point he needed every single one of the old SS members. He said, essentially, that only if the old comrades would stand by him faithfully could the SS cleanse itself of these people who did not fit into it. He could only expect the most heavy tasks to be carried out by the old SS members. Then he suddenly stopped and told me that Hitler had sometime ago given him the order for the extermination of the Jews. He said that the preparations were already in progress, and I think that he used the expression that for reasons of camouflage one would have to work as quickly as possible.

Thus a man such as Brack, who was not quite enough of a conformist, somewhat too troublesome and too critical of his organization than was considered desirable, although there must have pre-existed an essential willingness on his part, was made into a fully cooperative tool of the criminal organization by becoming involved as an active participant in one of his organization's greatest crimes.

It is characteristic of the peculiar schematized thinking which was fostered in SS circles that Brack defended himself with the most peculiar sophistry against having been a member of a criminal organization. His defense counsel asked Brack whether on the basis of his personal conferences with Himmler in 1941 and 1942 he could tell that Himmler wanted to use the SS for the execution of plans which were judged as criminal by the International Military Tribunal. Brack replied that he could not arrive at that conclusion because he assumed that "Himmler was planning these things as chief of the German police in which capacity, of course, the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office) was subordinate to him. I could not assume that the SS was to be used for such purposes," (p. 7549 of the German transcript, p. 7455 of the English transcript). And Brack kept a perfectly straight face when he said that in his capacity as an SS man he had never received any criminal orders. He admitted that Himmler gave criminal orders and that he himself received criminal orders and requests. He admitted that the acts of genocide which were instigated and carried out were a crime. Brack, however, had no realization of the fact that he slid into



this criminal activity in his capacity as a member of the SS and that the SS was the main source from which this criminal activity originated, although this criminal activity did not remain restricted to the SS itself.

Large elements of the Wehrmacht were integrated into the criminal group, frequently under the motivational influence of attached SS personnel but with the connivance of key personnel in the army high command, Keitel for instance. The manner in which army people were drawn into criminal activity was similar to the way in which this was done with SS personnel. Thus, individuals were frequently picked for the commission of certain crimes of which these people themselves had been vocal in disapproving. This is vividly shown in the case of Colonel Karl von Bothmer, a commander of German armed forces in Yugoslavia. In the files of the supreme command of the Wehrmacht we found a letter from this officer, dated August 6, 1941, (Doc. No. NOKW 1011) in which he had protested against an order for the indiscriminate shooting of arrested Yugoslav civilians who had not been specifically taken as hostages for specific crimes, without due process of martial law. Von Bothmer concluded his letter as follows: "Any request to have people shot to death who were not involved in the matter I cannot fulfill, particularly since one may assume in most cases that it will not touch the culprits at all." We do not know exactly what type of pressure was exerted on this man. But we know that this was the very same Colonel Karl von Bothmer who later became notorious as the mass murderer of Nish, Yugoslavia, where he committed the very same crime of which his letter of August 6, 1941, had so eloquently disapproved. He has since, namely in February and March of 1947, been tried for the murder of 700 civilians in February 1942, and he has been executed as a war criminal.

One of the men sentenced to life imprisonment in the Medical Case, Professor Dr. Gerhard A. H. Rose, vice president of the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin, was on trial for participation in a crime of which he had originally disapproved. This crime consisted of typhus experiments in the Buchenwald concentration camp, during which 290 people were killed by inoculation with live typhus virus; and of similar experiments at the Natzweiler concentration camp, where about 50 people were killed in the same manner. Prior to his own participation Rose had made a personal protest against these experiments to the president of the Robert Koch Institute, Professor Gildemeister, who had organized the experiments; and later, after he had already participated, he again expressed himself as opposed to these ex-

periments on scientific and moral grounds, in an open meeting of the third conference of consulting physicians in May 1943 in Berlin, at which Dr. Ding-Schuler, who carried out the Buchenwald experiments, presented his first scientific results. Nevertheless, Rose soon resumed his participation.

It is obvious that group pressure, although no overt threats or coercion, was brought to bear on von Bothmer, on Rose, and on the others who committed crimes in violation of their own principles. This illustrates that an important fact concerning motivation and with which we are so familiar in ordinary crime applies also to war crimes and to these ideologically conditioned crimes against humanity—namely, that fear and cowardice, especially fear of ostracism by the group, are in a number of cases more important motives than simple ferocity or aggressiveness.

Another example is that of Otto Ohlendorf, Gruppenfuehrer (lieutenant general) of the Waffen SS, whose ghastly testimony before the International Military Tribunal in Nurnberg will be remembered by all who know the record of the case. He was the chief of the dreaded Einsatzgruppe D, one of the four special task forces which operated in the conquered eastern territories. His testimony of January 3, 1946, covers pages 2001 to 2055 of the transcript. Ohlendorf admitted on the stand responsibility for the killing of 90,000 unarmed men, women, and children (p. 2010 of the record). He admitted that he was present at these mass executions. The question by a member of the tribunal, "Were all Jewish children murdered?", was answered by Ohlendorf with "Yes," (p. 2037 of the record).

Ohlendorf carried out his ghastly work in the East from July 1941 till June 1942. Prior to this assignment he held a position under the Economics Ministry and at the same time acted as part-time chief of Office III of the RSHA (SD) of the SS.

Upon meeting this confessed mass murderer I was rather surprised to find him to be a mild-mannered man of slight build and of a deliberate, hesitant, even diffident, manner of speech. He stated that he had been a loyal Party member and a member of the SS since 1925. His first difficulties with the Party hierarchy occurred in 1933 after the rise to power of National Socialism because he had opposed a trend toward what he called "National Bolshevism" within the Party. He was imprisoned for a short time in Kiel but was soon released and promoted. He again had serious difficulties with Himmler in 1939 because of his disagreement with Himmler's anti-Jewish policy. He had submitted a plan to give the Jews a minority status shortly after the beginning of the Polish campaign, in October 1939, which was violently disapproved of by Heydrich and Himmler. At that

time Himmler demanded Ohlendorf's dismissal from the government service and from the SS, but Heydrich smoothed things out because he preferred to have subordinates who were not on too good terms with Himmler and whose contacts with Himmler would therefore have to go through him alone.

Ohlendorf again got into difficulties in 1941 when he attempted to protect the adherents of the anthroposophic movement<sup>1</sup> who were then beginning to be persecuted by the Nazi government. It was shortly after that that he received his orders to head one of the dreaded "*Einsatzgruppen*" (special task forces) in the East. These *Einsatzgruppen* consisted of 500 enlisted men, 150 officers, and one commanding officer. Their sole purpose was to kill large groups of unarmed, defenseless men, women, and children who had been registered and collected for the ostensible purpose of being re-settled in another locality. In reality they were transported in trucks to lonely places in the country where they were murdered. Ohlendorf was slated to be the commanding officer of one of these *Einsatzgruppen*. He stated that he had refused this assignment twice but had accepted when he was ordered the third time. I asked him why he had refused. He replied that he had no inclination for this task, saying,

I never have been friendly toward the State police and I never wanted to have anything to do with this matter, but I was ordered by Heydrich because—I must express it the way I know it—for one thing, he wanted to have me removed from Berlin because Bormann demanded it. I had come into disrepute as a protector of the anthroposophers. I had first supported them in opposition to policy in May, 1941 after they had been forbidden and locked up by Bormann. And furthermore, Heydrich wanted to take away my liberty which consisted of the fact that I was not financially dependent upon the SS but that my official assignment was under the Economics Ministry. These two motives were the reasons he wanted to get me away from Berlin; and that he gave me this assignment was probably caused by the fact that he wanted to demoralize me because already then and later I was against his SD<sup>2</sup> activity . . . And that not only came from Heydrich but especially from Himmler."

Ohlendorf then continued that he had refused the assignment at first because the manner of killing these people was disagreeable to him. "What manner?" I asked.

He replied, "The shooting of defenseless human beings." I then asked him: "When did you know for the first time that this was not merely a disagreeable assignment, but that it was a crime? When were you for the first time conscious of that fact?"

<sup>1</sup> The adherents of an esoteric sect similar to one known in the United States as the theosophic movement.

<sup>2</sup> SD, or *Sicherheits-Dienst* (Security Service), is the SS equivalent of the Gestapo, which in view of the fact that Himmler, the chief of the SS, was at the same time chief of the German police, was actually the controlling and policy-making element of the Gestapo.

He replied, "When I first heard that these things happened."

"When was that?"

"That I cannot exactly say; but whether I already had heard of it before I received the order or afterwards, that I can no longer say. At any rate this order was a subject which was difficult to take from the human standpoint."

I then asked Ohlendorf what he meant by the term, "to demoralize me." Did he mean that because he had shown some opposition in the question of treatment of the Jews and the anthroposophers, he was subsequently deliberately put into a position where he not only had to accept decisions which went against his grain but where he himself actually had to act against his own convictions? Ohlendorf replied that this was the general policy in dealing with such people who, like himself, dared to disagree, in order "to corrupt us morally" (*um uns moralisch kaputt zu machen*).

Ohlendorf went on to say that in this system of controlling people by corrupting them morally various methods were used. He stated that he did not know for sure to what extent Hitler used this technique, but Himmler and Heydrich always tried to corrupt people whom they wanted to use in order to have them completely in hand. This was not always done by involving them in capital crimes; in some cases lesser, compromising situations sufficed. Heydrich established a special brothel in Berlin for that purpose. He would invite people there, put them into a compromising situation—in some cases by using a quite primitive system of seduction—and then suddenly Heydrich appeared on the scene and it was made clear to the person involved that Heydrich had been a spectator. Heydrich used this special brothel as a means of blackmail. An SS general who had a mentally ill brother was occasionally reminded of that fact as a means of blackmail by a no lesser personage than Himmler himself. Other people were bribed, such as the field marshals, or were involved in financial corruption as were many people in the Speer ministry. The Speer ministry was just one hotbed of corruption—everybody was doubly paid and more than that. Other people who could not be bribed by Hitler, Himmler, and Speer or compromised by means of seduction to sex escapades by Heydrich were involved in more sinister ways. All knowledge of a man's weak points was used against him.

Ohlendorf continued,

Since I was in disrepute as an unsoldierly type who had previously declined to become a soldier, they hoped in this way to influence my character, which they knew was predominantly sensitive, in order to make me transgress and thus to force me into their pattern.

The type of blood cement outlined above played a role even in the case of Dr. Sigmund Rascher, the notorious vivisectionist of Dachau concentration camp. Prior to making application to Himmler and the SS to permit him to make experiments on inmates of Dachau concentration camp in May 1939, he had been forbidden to use the facilities of the Pathological Institute of the University of Munich because he was suspected of having communist sympathies (Doc. No. NO—3679).

A very important case in this connection is that of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, SS Obergruppenfuehrer and General of the Waffen SS and police. Von dem Bach was in charge of all so-called antipartisan activities in the eastern territories. He commanded troops which roamed all over the vast conquered eastern territories behind the German fighting fronts in Poland and Russia, whose record of looting, arson, and mass murder is equalled only by that of the Huns and Mongols of days past. General von dem Bach was the deputy Genghis Khan of this horde which was composed of SS and police troops and attached Wehrmacht formations. The number of these troops was greater than that of the Einsatz groups. Von dem Bach had up to two divisions at his disposal, although the number of troops which were assigned to him varied during various phases of the war. The troops which he commanded included the notorious Dirlewanger Brigade which was composed of habitual criminals including poachers, robbers, murderers, men condemned because of sex crimes, and those political prisoners who had been members of the Nazi Party prior to the commission of their political offense. Its commanding officer, Oskar Dirlewanger, had himself been in prison for sex crimes. The number of people who were murdered in cold blood by Von dem Bach's forces is likewise much greater than the victims of any one Einsatz group. While Ohlendorf, head of Einsatz Group D, admitted the killing of 90,000 men, women and children in the space of one year, merely one single report of antipartisan activities (Report No. 51, of 29 December 1942 applying to the months of August to November 1942) shows that among others 363,211 Jews were executed by these formations.

The exact records of infamy which these culprits kept is a novel feature in crime, which is quite characteristic of the SS as a whole, with only a few cagey exceptions. It is obviously the result of indoctrination. Non-SS Nazis, when involved in similar crimes, usually tried to cover up at the same time.

The case of Von dem Bach is interesting because he not only admitted the fact that crimes were committed but he also showed a certain amount of insight into how they came about. All the

while he was of course trying to minimize his personal participation and responsibility, more so than Ohlendorf. But he showed greater insight in regard to the fact that the Nazi ideology and the basic structure of Nazism and the SS were the cause of these crimes, while Ohlendorf and others held not National Socialism itself responsible for these crimes but rather what they called the "dark side" of Hitler's and Himmler's personalities.

Von dem Bach testified before the International Military Tribunal on January 7, 1946 (pp. 2219-2244 of the record). He stated that he enlisted in the German army in 1914 at the age of 15 years, that he served from 1914 to 1918 and was wounded and decorated twice. He remained as an officer in the peacetime army after the last war, was discharged in 1924, and then transferred as battalion commander to an unofficial border defense formation but continued to remain a reserve officer in the army. He joined the Nazi Party and the SS in 1930, and in 1932 he was elected as a National Socialist representative of the German Reichstag. In 1934 he became superior SS and police leader for East Prussia and in 1936 for Silesia. At the beginning of the war against Russia he was sent to the Russian front with the rank of *Gruppenfuhrer* and lieutenant general of the Waffen SS and police. He saw front-line service before Moscow and near Veliky Luky. He was subsequently appointed as higher SS and police leader for the rear zone of the central army group under General Von Schenkendorff with the principal assignment of fighting partisans in the rear of the German central army group. Formations of the Waffen SS, of the border police, and of the Wehrmacht were put at his disposal for these activities. At the end of 1942 he was appointed chief of all antipartisan units for the entire eastern territories, in which capacity he was subordinate only to Heinrich Himmler.

Von dem Bach admitted that these antipartisan operations were carried out in such a way as to result in the unnecessary killing of large numbers of the civilian population (p. 2225 of the record). He claimed that he and General Von Schenkendorff were powerless to stop these excesses because of an order issued by the highest Wehrmacht authorities that German soldiers who committed offenses against the civilian population were not to be punished. "This order was an obstacle to correcting the excesses of the troops," and "prevented the only proper way of fighting" (p. 2225 of the record). Von dem Bach was then asked, "Do you know anything about the existence of a special brigade which was formed from contrabandists, poachers, and people released from prison?" He replied:

One battalion under the command of Dirlewanger was put in as an antipartisan unit in the central army group. This battalion was gradually enlarged by some reserves, actually reaching the size of a regiment and later of a brigade. This was the Brigade Dirlewanger, and it consisted for the most part of criminal elements, officially of poachers, but there were real criminals among them who had committed robbery and even murder.

He was then asked why the German army used forces recruited from the ranks of criminals especially in the war against the partisans. He replied:

I am of the opinion that there was a close connection with the speech made by Heinrich Himmler at the beginning of 1941 before the campaign against Russia, when he spoke of the purpose of the Russian campaign, which was to decimate the Slav population by 30 million, and in order to be active in this direction, a troop of low characters would have to be formed, (p. 2228 of the record).

Von dem Bach then admitted that the type of troops used and the instructions given were aimed at the direct destruction of the population. He stated that official reports had to be made as to how many partisans had been killed in battle, how many partisans had been executed, how many people suspected to be partisans had been executed, and how many losses the troops themselves had sustained; from these reports the highest authorities could see exactly what went on.

Individual commanders were empowered to decide for themselves whom they wanted to suspect as a partisan and to kill him (p. 2230 of the record). Von dem Bach admitted that the fighting against partisan movements was designed for the destruction of the Slav and Jewish people in the eastern conquered territories. He stated that the Wehrmacht was aware of this aim that the methods of antipartisan warfare were designed for the destruction of the Slavic and Jewish races—that is, for the complete destruction of the Jewish race and the reduction of the Slav race by 30 millions (p. 2231 of the record). Upon repeated questioning, he reiterated that the Slav population was to be reduced by 30 millions. He stated that Himmler had mentioned this in his speech prior to the Russian campaign.

Von dem Bach claimed that he had made many proposals to change this policy and to limit the use of antipartisan forces strictly to real antipartisan activity; but he petitioned unsuccessfully because, as he found out, such a change was not desired by Himmler (p. 2232 of the record). At Himmler's Wewelsburg speech in 1941 twelve of the leading Gruppenfuhrers of the SS, including Von dem Bach, had been present. In the cross-examination by Rosenberg's defense counsel, Dr. Thoma, Von dem Bach again confirmed the fact that many innocent people were

killed in the so-called antipartisan activities. He was then asked by the defense counsel (p. 2241 of the record): "How did you reconcile it with your conscience to be an inspector general and to remain an inspector general with the antipartisan forces?"

A. I did not reconcile that with my conscience.

Q. Do you believe that Himmler's order in which he demanded that 30 million Slavs should be exterminated—do you believe that was his opinion or was it a part of the whole National Socialistic attitude toward life?

A. I am today of the mind that the logical consequences of that attitude was such an order.

Q. Today—what was your opinion at that time?

A. It is difficult for a German to make this confession and it took me a long while.

Q. How does it happen that a few days ago a witness appeared before this tribunal, namely Ohlendorf, who admitted that under his command of Einsatz groups, 90,000 people were killed, and informed the court that this did not correspond to National Socialist ideology?

A. I am of the opinion that when for years, for decades, the doctrine is preached that the Slav race is an inferior race and Jews not even human, then such an outcome is inevitable.

Q. Nevertheless, the fact remains, along with the attitude that you may have had at that time, you also had a conscience?

A. Today also, and that is the reason I am here.

In a preceding interrogation which took place on October 19, 1945, Von dem Bach had stated that he was relieved from his position in Silesia and sent to the Russian front because he had refused to put the Jews in his area into ghetto camps and, especially, to arrange pogroms in which 5,000 were supposed to be shot. In other interrogations Von dem Bach had made the same and similar statements and had also made the statement that as early as 1935 he had difficulties with Himmler. At one time in 1935 he had been arrested by order of Goering and Himmler and was supposed to be executed, but his life was then saved by the intervention of Darre. I therefore decided to re-interrogate Von dem Bach and to obtain some more data about the socio-psychological setting in which he had committed his crimes.

I found Von dem Bach to be a well-built man of athletic physique who gave the impression of a man of hard-driving energy and of a great deal of ambition. He spoke with clarity and vigor. He showed definite eagerness to make a good impression and to minimize his own participation, and yet it appeared that he had given a good deal of thought to what he and others about him had done during the last 13 years. All leading questions were avoided and he was allowed to express himself and to state his case quite freely. It is interesting that in this connection he formulated, without the slightest suggestion on my part,



a very clear conception of the blood cement theory outlined above. His statements of facts were later checked with others, especially Ohlendorf and Wolff.

As to his arrest and threatened execution in 1935, he stated that he had, in his capacity as superior SS leader for East Prussia, objected to the corrupt financial practices of the Gauleiter Koch; and for this reason during a speech which Finance Minister Schacht gave in Koenigsberg in which he endorsed Koch's policies, Von dem Bach demonstratively walked out of the hall and took his entire SS detachment with him. (Karl Wolff, Himmler's former chief of staff, confirmed this incident: He recalled that Schacht had said in his speech that honor, blood, and flag were all right, but gold also was a reality to be reckoned with. Wolff stated that he approved of Von dem Bach's courage and determination to march out with the entire SS at this point. He added that Von dem Bach missed being executed by a hair's breadth because of Goering's and Himmler's resentment of this action.)

After his rehabilitation on Darre's intervention, Von dem Bach was not sent back to East Prussia but was given an equivalent assignment in Silesia to which certain provinces taken from Poland were later added. In 1940 he again incurred Himmler's displeasure by not cooperating in the establishment of ghetto camps for Jews and later by his failure to arrange pogroms in his territory.

About his subsequent activities in Russia and in the parts of Poland taken from Russia after the beginning of the Russian campaign, he of course tried to incriminate himself as little as possible, as he had done on previous interrogations. In an interrogation on January 15, 1947, when he was shown the above-cited report on the execution of 366,211 Jews by antipartisan forces during August to November 1942, he merely stated that this was the sort of camouflage which he had always disapproved of because execution of Jews is certainly not antipartisan warfare. These mass executions were usually carried out in lonely places in the country before deep gullies or large anti-tank ditches into which the bodies fell or were dumped and covered with dirt.

It is obvious, however, from the documentary evidence that Von dem Bach himself included such and similar executions in his reports on antipartisan warfare, for instance in his report dated Minsk, 23 June 1943 (Doc. No. NO-2608) in which the ratio of casualties (600 on the German side versus 10,000 partisans) and the small number of weapons captured (900 rifles)

indicated that the majority of partisans listed as "killed in action" in the report were actually rounded up and massacred. (*Obergruppenfuehrer* Wolff stated that Von dem Bach was always intent on giving large figures because he wanted to get the Knight's Cross very badly and that one time he had criticized him because in a report covering May and June 1944, Von dem Bach had taken credit for people, by including them in his own report, who had actually been killed by SS *Gruppenfuehrer* (Lieutenant General) Globocnik's outfit in the southeastern theatre of war in northern Italy and Yugoslavia when Von dem Bach inspected Globocnik's operations in that theatre during May and June 1944.)

Von dem Bach expressed great pride over the fact that he had once preferred court martial charges against some of his men who killed a group of four or five civilian suspects in a particularly cruel manner by pouring gasoline over them and setting them on fire while they were still alive; this was done in the courtyard of a building amidst shouts of approval from a great crowd of soldiers. The court martial sentences which included death and prison sentences were, however, disapproved by higher authority and the culprits were freed (Interrogation No. 633 of 17 January 1947). In a similar incident when the entire male population of a village was executed and fire was set to the village after the women, children, and cattle had been driven away, he decided after consultation with higher authority not to prefer charges against the perpetrators under his command because a conviction was considered unlikely (Interrogation No. 633A of 20 January 1947). There is, however, documentary evidence to prove that Von dem Bach by no means condemned such outrages prior to German's defeat, but on the contrary recommended to higher authority the court martial of one of his subordinate SS *Sturmabannfuehrers* who had made an official complaint about such atrocities in 1944 (Doc. No. NO-2530).

Von dem Bach told me and previous interrogators that on three occasions in 1941 he had warned the Jews of Bialystok, Mogilev, and Baranowicze respectively of the fact that his forces were approaching and of what was in store for them, by sending word ahead to the chief rabbi of each of these three towns. His motive for doing this was that one of his sisters who had emigrated to Brazil was married to a Jewish musician who had been born in Bialystok and whose relatives still lived there. He knew this brother-in-law well and had been rather fond of him before this brother-in-law and his sister were forced to emigrate from Germany after the Nazis came to power. For

that reason he sent the warning. He stated, however, that his warning was not taken seriously enough. After hiding a few days and when they thought "that the German civilian administration was there," the Jews returned from the woods and walked in to their own destruction. (Obviously these rabbis and their country flocks did not understand the complexity and the characteristic "dual-track thinking" of this high-ranking SS man who had seemed to be friendly by warning them; on the other hand, it is much more likely that they returned because they ran out of food in the woods).

"Thus the misfortune came about. They did not believe . . . I am the only living witness but I must say the truth. Contrary to the opinion of the National Socialists that the Jews were a highly organized group, the appalling fact was that they had no organization whatsoever. The mass of the Jewish people were completely taken by surprise. They did not know at all what to do; they had no directives or slogan as to how they should act. That is the greatest proof of the lie of anti-Semitism because it gives the lie to the old slogan that the Jews are conspiring to dominate the world and that they are so highly organized. In reality they had no organization of their own at all, not even an information service. If they had some sort of organization, these people could have been saved by the millions; but instead they were taken completely by surprise. Never before has a people gone as unsuspectingly to its disaster. Nothing was prepared. Absolutely nothing. It is not so, as the anti-Semites say, that they were friendly to the Soviets. That is the most appalling misconception of all. The Jews in the old Poland, who were never communistic in their sympathies, were, throughout the area from the river Bug eastward, more afraid of Bolshevism than of the Nazis. This was insanity. They could have been saved. There were people among them who had much to lose, business people; they didn't want to leave. In addition there was the love of home and their old experiences with the pogroms in Russia. After the first anti-Jewish actions of the Germans they thought now the wave was over and so they walked back to their undoing."

In August 1944 Von dem Bach was put in charge of the suppression of the Warsaw revolt which was led on the Polish side by General Bor-Komorowski. This military action, with its resulting sacking and razing of Warsaw and the wanton murder of a large part of its civilian population, is one of the worst crimes committed by the German armed forces. Von dem Bach admitted that even before the defeat of Germany he had disapproved of the conduct of that operation. He stated that he was given the singular honor of having a medal struck in commemoration of this action and to be in sole charge of its award to meritorious participants in this operation; but because of the type of operation it had been he never made use of this privilege and did not award this medal to anyone. However, he admitted that he himself received the coveted Knight's Cross after the

successful suppression of the Warsaw revolt. He credits himself with two acts of chivalry—one, that he court martialed one of his subordinate SS *Gruppenfuhrers*, Kaminski, and had him executed unofficially because of his excesses in looting, without waiting for approval by higher authorities; and secondly, for the fact that he took his military opponents as prisoners of war contrary to Hitler's and Himmler's orders—according to which they should all have been killed by execution upon capture. Contrary to these orders he brought the revolt to an end by giving General Bor-Komorowski and the remainder of his forces the status of prisoners of war as terms for their surrender. For this purpose he had to countermand Hitler's and Himmler's order which explicitly stated, "Everyone is to be killed. No prisoners are to be taken. Warsaw is to be razed to the ground and an example is to be made for all of Europe." He stated that he incurred both Hitler's and Himmler's wrath by disregarding that order and for taking General Bor-Komorowski and the remainder of his forces prisoners on 28 September 1944. He was ordered to report personally to Hitler's headquarters and to explain his action.

The way in which Hitler handled the situation was very characteristic of our theory outlined above and entirely in conformity with it. He immediately gave Von dem Bach a new and still more criminal assignment as plenipotentiary to carry out the *coup d'état* in Hungary. In the course of this *coup d'état* on October 14, 1944, the regent of that country was imprisoned, his son kidnapped, the entire country taken under German control, and 60,000 Jews were arrested immediately for purposes of extermination and deportation, of which 25,000 were killed outright or perished on the subsequent eight-day death march which began on October 15, 1944. Von dem Bach described this interesting interview with Hitler, which took place early in October, 1944, immediately prior to his assignment to Hungary, as follows:

"Hitler told me, 'Actually you have forfeited your head because you have acted against my orders. But since your method has been successful and the battle is won after all, I have accepted it.' That was typically Hitler. But I still felt uneasy because I could name innumerable examples of people to whom he gave a decoration and then had them hanged. He continued: 'The success was decisive. I have approved of it now. You were lucky. Maybe you will be lucky again the next time too. You seem to have a streak of luck now.' Everybody was there, Keitel, Himmler, Goering, all prominent people. I said, 'I have held out and been successful only because I kept up negotiations with the partisans.' Hitler then said, 'Hungary threatens to secede. I shall send you now to Hungary to prevent the secession of Hungary and I will give you plenipotentiary power. You have to prevent Horthy from jumping off the running

train, if need be by armed force. The moment of action I will determine myself. I shall send you word by courier. You will have to arrest the entire Hungarian government and to take care that the Hungarians will not fight against Germany as the Roumanians did.' "

Himmler's reaction on the same occasion was in the form of a bit of not too subtle blackmail. He congratulated Von dem Bach on his victory over Warsaw and at the same time gave him a notarized certificate that his brother Viktor Von dem Bach had died insane in a sanitarium near Bielefeld. This was obvious blackmail because of what it meant to an SS officer to be "hereditarily tainted" in any form.

In Hungary, after Regent Horthy's son was kidnapped by Von dem Bach's subordinate, SS Lieutenant Colonel Skorzeny, Von dem Bach received word from Hitler to take over as plenipotentiary, to deliver an ultimatum to Horthy, and to bring about his capitulation on October 14, 1944. Von dem Bach was still rather proud of the trick which he played on Horthy by bluffing him with a large number of heavy tanks for which no ammunition had yet arrived. As soon as Von dem Bach took over the control of Hungary, on October 14, 1944, Heinrich Himmler immediately telephoned him long distance, offered his congratulations, and urged him not to delay and make difficulties with the immediate deportation and extermination of the Jews of Budapest. There is no doubt that these measures were carried out immediately, namely on October 15, 1944, but Von dem Bach went through a great deal of explanations that this was actually Winkelmann's and Veessenmeyer's responsibility. Although Von dem Bach was the plenipotentiary he insisted that Veessenmeyer could have prevented the action against the Jews but that he would have been dismissed from office had he done so (Interrogation Summary No. 1875 of 14 April 1947).

Von dem Bach revealed the first evidence of real insight into the social-psychological role which involvement in crime played in Nazi Germany in a rather surprising connection when he discussed the fact that the Allied countries had not utilized with sufficient determination the antagonisms which existed in pre-war Germany between the army on the one hand and the SS and Party on the other. He said:

"There were opposition groups in existence. Think of the enormous animosity which existed between army and Party. Then, compelled by the war and by their bad conscience they were brought together. Hitler let them all become guilty. I am firmly convinced that his great crimes had only that one motive: 'I will let them all become guilty. They must never be allowed to jump off the running train.' If one sees it that way, you see how one becomes guilty, if you take Field Marshal von Weichs for instance as an example. This man, who throughout the entire army

not only in Hitler's time but even before was called 'the pious general,' this man, who as a devout Catholic never missed a religious service, who still in this war in Belgrade had his own private chaplain who held masses especially for him—this man will be tried here and it will be proven that he is guilty, that he has really backed up pure terror orders which were entirely inhuman, the hostage orders, that he in any case passed them on."

I then asked General Von dem Bach, "Did you hear in this connection the word 'blood cement'?" He answered:

That is quite clear. That is the same as what I mean.

Q. Did you hear that expression?

A. I don't recall that expression. Is that supposed to be a Hitler expression?

Q. Yes. Hitler was supposed to have obtained that from a book on Genghis Khan.

A. I received this book. I can testify that it was officially sent out by Hermann Goering with Himmler's approval. At Christmas in 1938 it was sent to everyone in the Party down to county leader (Kreisleiter). There were two volumes and a supplement. Therefore I became convinced that one wanted to solve this question of the excess birthrate in the East, which was bound to crush Germany some day, in this war once and for all in the manner of a Genghis Khan. I therefore was not surprised when already during the war against Poland ghettos were established, but the main danger I found in the East was the annihilation of the Slavs.

He went on to say that in 1943 preparations for the systematic mass extermination of the Slavs were made in the neighborhood of Smolensk, near Mogilev. In this region which was under the control of Von dem Bach, the erection of large gas chambers and crematoria was planned by a commission which arrived from Hamburg, Germany, and looked over various sites including an armament factory which was to be transformed into an extermination center which would dwarf the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz. After the complete occupation of Russia the "problem of the Slavs" was to be solved by large-scale exterminations. The enforced retreat of the German army, however, foiled this plan.

Von dem Bach stated that in the system of letting people become guilty in order to control them with which the Nazis operated, presents of money and the encouragement of financial corruption were also used. He said:

General Brauchitsch let Hitler pay for his second wife. Hitler paid the settlement to Brauchitsch's first wife and in that way Brauchitsch became Hitler's bound serf. If I accept 100,000 marks I am no longer a free man. Guderian allowed Himmler, on Hitler's order, to give him a baronial estate in Posen. The old Field Marshal Hindenburg allowed Hitler to give him the Prussian Forest in East Prussia as a present. Mackensen let Hitler give him an estate near Stettin which once belonged to his ancestors. I saw already in these early days how Hitler bought these people. All these people thus became accomplices.

The talk which I had with Karl Wolff, SS *Obergruppenfuehrer* and general of the Waffen SS, who had been chief of Himmler's personal staff from 1933 until 1943, was likewise very revealing. *Obergruppenfuehrer* Wolff was expected to be thoroughly familiar with all personnel problems concerning Himmler's staff until September, 1943, when he was transferred as supreme SS and police leader to the Italian theatre of war where he was taken prisoner of war by the Allies after Germany's defeat.

*Obergruppenfuehrer* Wolff is a tall slender man of good appearance and manners, who is exteriorly smart, suave, and smooth. He is somewhat overpolite, indicating a marked eagerness to please and to make a good impression. He is the type of man whom the Germans call *Streber*, by which they mean an effectively ambitious person, a place hunter.

Wolff was very much on the defensive about his personal participation in crimes. He claimed that as chief of Himmler's protocol he was merely in charge of the social, the cultural, the beautiful, and the positive aspects of Himmler's activities; while for all matters which had to do with what he called Himmler's "second face," Heydrich exclusively was in charge. I did not want to disturb the interview by pointing out the fact that on a captured film record of one of Himmler's visits to a death camp in Minsk in 1941 the striking figure of *Obergruppenfuehrer* Wolff can be seen walking immediately behind and to the right of Himmler amid the scenes of horror, walking along the barbed-wire enclosure in which huddled masses of emaciated humanity look on in mute fear and despair while the hangmen strut by. This film which shows the visit of Himmler and his staff to the extermination camp in Minsk in 1941 is included in the documentary film "The Nazi Rise to Power" which is a document of the International Military Tribunal (Doc. No. USA 167).

Subsequent conversation likewise brought out the fact that Wolff knew far more about Himmler's activities than he was willing to admit under direct questioning. He said that the beginning of the development of what he called the "second face" of Himmler was his deification of power and success which caused him to become unfaithful to the decent goals of the SS. By his infidelity he involved others in that same infidelity to the old, decent SS ideals:

This unfaithfulness began at the top. He wanted to have success at any price. He thought that "Right is what is useful to my nation." This concept has not grown up gradually as it had in England where it was balanced by a careful weighing of the price, but with him became boundless without weight and measure of the cost. It became the enforcement of policy at any price. In carrying out the task set by the Fuehrer to render the eastern territories free of all contamination by

non-Germans he used a small circle of people as principal aides. Himmler rendered those people whom he intended to use powerless to resist his commands by implied and open threats, including the threat of holding their families responsible if they did not cooperate (Sippenhaft). All this recruitment and these pressures went on behind closed doors. At the time the decision was made to carry out the planned exterminations, principally the extermination of the Jews, the matter had already been prepared by a few collaborators, especially Eichmann and Hoess. They were already there when the decision came to exterminate. When that decision had ripened in Himmler's brain one day he also decided to entrust the execution of the plan to a small group of close associates which he picked himself. Globocnik<sup>3</sup> appeared the most suitable for such a brutal task. He was always considered a ruthless person. Also, Von dem Bach was somewhat similar. Others were of a different type of mentality and were chosen for other reasons. Ohlendorf was always an especially decent fellow. He was an idealist who, as Reichsfuehrer Himmler used to say, "always ran about lamenting and deploring, and acted as if he were the only one who carried the Grail in his hands unsullied." Ohlendorf was rather soft by nature, to which the Reichsfuehrer objected and which he wanted to see changed by education. He had a blameless past without dark points so that he could not be put under pressure. The Reichsfuehrer wanted to harden this valuable man.

I then asked Wolff to tell me more about Globocnik. He replied that Globocnik was an old Nazi Party member from Austria who had been imprisoned there in Woellersdorf prior to the Anschluss because of his Nazi Party membership. After the conquest of Austria, he was made Gauleiter of Vienna with the rank of colonel in the SS. However, he failed in this position because of his difficulty in getting along with other old Party members there. He was subsequently deprived of his rank and reduced to a simple enlisted SS man. He served in the Polish campaign as an enlisted man and later became a sergeant, finally being promoted to second lieutenant. Then suddenly, after the extermination program had been decided upon, he was put in charge of the exterminations of Jews by gas and for that purpose was made superior SS and police leader of Lublin with the rank of Major General of Police, which was quite a jump in rank; this was done because after all he was an old fighter. He had been imprisoned in Woellersdorf and the view was taken that he had been overthrown by intrigues and so Himmler wanted to give him a chance to rehabilitate himself by this assignment to Lublin.

In October, 1943, Globocnik was transferred and promoted to the rank of SS Gruppenfuehrer and Lieutenant General of Police, in which capacity he was placed in charge of five northern-Italian and Yugoslav provinces, obviously in recognition of his

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<sup>3</sup> SS *Gruppenfuehrer* Odilo Globocnik was the man in charge of the extermination center in Lublin, Poland, where the first mass executions of Jews by means of gas were carried out in specially built gas chambers.



participation in the organization of the extermination program of the Jews in gas chambers, which he instituted in Poland with the advice and expert guidance of Brack who had placed experience and personnel from the extermination program of the insane at his disposal for the genocidal program in the East. According to a report received on 2 June 1945, Globocnik committed suicide by poison after his arrest by Allied forces.

I then asked *Obergruppenfuehrer* Wolff what would have happened if Ohlendorf, for instance, had refused to carry out his assignment. Wolff replied:

He would have been silenced. He (Himmler) would not have let him live. He would have liquidated him in some illegal way. Himmler would have done so from his conviction that someone must do it if it is necessary for the welfare of 85 million Germans. Then one must sacrifice the salvation of one's soul, or one must give up one's life. Wolff added that the view which an SS member had to take in this matter was like this: "I must do it. In order to clear this new living space I must sacrifice myself, the salvation of my soul, and my honor, or else give up my life."

The fact that the blood-cement theory was applied on a much larger scale than merely in individual cases is nowhere more clearly expressed than in Gottlob Berger's reaction to reports on SS crimes, particularly crimes committed by Von dem Bach and Von Gottberg and their units in Russia, which he received in July 1943. It is interesting to realize at this point that the German army at times prepared extensive reports on atrocities committed by the SS in various theatres of war. Usually the SS countered this by compiling a still larger number of reports on atrocities committed by the army in the same theatre of war, according to Kogon.<sup>4</sup> Kogon states in his book that this went so far that once the army compiled an entire volume containing evidence on atrocities committed by the SS. The SS parried this move by compiling two volumes of evidence on atrocities committed by the army in the same theatres of war.

It is very interesting and revealing to go through some of these original reports. One of the earliest is a transcript of an oral report by an army commander to Lieutenant General von Bomhard and General of the Police Daluge on 6 February 1940 (Doc. No. NO-3011). In this report the German commander expressed the opinion that the official policy of persecution of Jews and Poles, acts of violence against the Jews, and in the first place the atrocities committed by SS and police personnel were doing great harm to the German cause.

The report went on:

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<sup>4</sup> Kogon, Eugen. *Der SS Staat*. Munich (Karl Alber), 1946, I-XXIII, 1-339.

It is bad policy to slaughter, as is happening now, some tens of thousands of Jews and Poles. This does neither kill the idea of the Polish state in the eyes of the masses nor does it dispose of the Jews; on the contrary, as this slaughter is being done it does the greatest harm, complicates the problems and makes them much more dangerous than they would have been if we had acted in a considered and practical way. These are the effects of the present policy:

a) Enemy propaganda is furnished with the most effective material that could possibly be thought of. What foreign radio stations have reported so far was only a tiny fraction of what actually happened. We must be prepared for an increase of foreign propaganda which will do extreme political damage since those disgusting atrocities actually happened and cannot be denied by any means.

d) The greatest harm, however, which will be suffered by the German people itself owing to present conditions, is the extreme brutalization and moral degeneracy which will spread among valuable German human material like pestilence in a very short time.

There is only one chance to stop this plague: to subject those criminals and their following instantly to military command and military jurisdiction.

The report then quoted a statement by General Ulex, commander of Grenzabschnitt Sued, addressed to the supreme commander of the army in the East and dated 6 February 1940. General Ulex also condemned the atrocities committed by police forces passionately and in addition believed that the superiors of those who committed the crimes tacitly approved their misdeeds and just did not want to interfere. He added that the atrocities which came to his knowledge were most likely only a small fraction of the total number of atrocities actually committed. He recommended that all police forces including their higher leaders and all commanders attached to the organizations of the Government General be dismissed quite abruptly, that all those units be inactivated and "replaced with morally intact and honorable units." Finally the report quoted a statement on the same subject by Majör von Tschammer und Osten, liaison officer at the Government General. This statement emphasized that in addition to atrocities against the population the SS and police also committed acts of robbery and looting whenever they carried out searches. Officially seized goods of all sorts were distributed among the police and SS forces or sold at a nominal price. At a conference at the Government General, held on 23 January 1940, Major General Buehrmann, commissioner for the four-year plan, reported that Rittmeister Schuh, the exceptionally efficient chief of one of the four-year-plan offices, managed to have the SS give up large quantities of watches and gold. With regard to such conditions, von Tschammer und Osten went on, one could not be surprised to see that everybody made use

of every chance to get rich. It could be done without any danger, for when stealing is committed by the whole organization the individual thief has no reason to be afraid of punishment. The Polish population who were defenseless in the face of these crimes and were driven to despair by such acts would, of course, fanatically support every movement aiming at revolt and revenge. "It is only natural that their feelings are increased to boundless hatred when they see, every time a transport arrives, the many corpses of children who died of hunger and the trucks full of human beings frozen to death."

The main report contained an enclosure listing and describing 33 specific instances of the most revolting acts of atrocity committed by SS and police personnel. In most of these cases the names of the SS and police personnel who committed these crimes and the number and denomination of their units were given.

On 1 November 1941, Wilhelm Kube, General Commissioner for White Ruthenia, sent a letter of complaint to Heinrich Lohse, Reich Commissioner for the eastern territories, in which he complained "about the manner in which the *Judenaktion* (the extermination of the Jews) in Sluzk was handled. He declared the officers of the Police Battalion No. 11 from Kauen to be responsible for the "insufficient and uncoordinated execution of this action, where the injured were buried together with the dead, only to work their way out of the graves again." He declared this to be highly detrimental to the reputation of the German administration and demanded that the responsible officers be prosecuted (Doc. No. NO-2456).

The most condemning document is a group of six reports (Doc. No. NO-3028) with a letter of transmittal dated 10 July 1943 from Dr. Braeutigam, the Reichs Minister of Occupied Eastern Territories, to SS *Obergruppenfuehrer* Berger, the Chief of the SS Hauptamt which was responsible for the recruitment of SS personnel. These reports included a report dated 2 July 1943 by Propaganda Leader Lauch, obviously a representative of the Propaganda Ministry who was sent to the East to spread National Socialist propaganda among the population; reports by the Reichs Commissioner Wilhelm Kube of 3 June 1943, by the General Commissioner of Minsk and others. Lauch's report gives a day by day description of antipartisan activities near Minsk, which started on 16 May 1943. Characteristic is his entry for the 24th of May 1943, describing what he found at Nebyschino:

There were two barns filled with the corpses of partisans or those suspected of being partisans who had been shot, and though fire had been

set to the barns, the corpses had not been burned completely. In one of the barns four pigs were feeding from six charred bodies . . . The whole picture was one of senseless devastation and made a very bad impression on the remaining population . . .

Lauch stated in his report that on the 27th of May 1943 he discontinued his propaganda campaign. He obviously compiled his report as an explanation of why he did so. He concluded that he considered propaganda ineffective in the face of an obvious policy of burning villages down and shooting the people. Lauch's report was forwarded to Braeutigam by Wilhelm Kube, to whom it had been sent by the General Commissioner of Minsk who included also his own observations and other adverse reports concerning the large antipartisan operations of the SS and police under the leadership of Von dem Bach and Von Gottberg.

An event very similar to that observed by Lauch was also described by Langer, a member of the staff of the General Commissioner of Minsk. Langer tells of incidents which occurred in Witonitsch near Borisow, which is in the vicinity of Minsk. He states: "Inhabitants were driven into a barn, shot down and the buildings set afire. Since the corpses did not burn completely, the pigs are carrying parts of the charred bodies into the villages where they lie about."

In his forwarding letter to Kube the General Commissioner of Minsk closes by saying, "Particularly the Regiment Dirlewanger excels in actions of that sort. It consists almost entirely of convicts from Germany."

Another report by Langer, from the Office of the General Commissioner of Minsk, contains the following information:

On the 27th of May at 1400 hours, the inhabitants of Krjwsk were herded into two houses by the SS and Ukrainians and fire was set to the houses so that they burned to death. The same happened in another village, Kraschynn.

Berger's reaction, in his one-page letter addressed to Braeutigam of the East Ministry, is very revealing. He stated that he regretted deeply that such reports were sent on without further investigation and thus caused a great stir and above all hampered close cooperation. In Berger's opinion, Generalkommissar Kube should have investigated these cases immediately and then contacted Von Gottberg and Von dem Bach. Berger closed:

We cannot change anything from where we are anyhow, for it is not possible to give orders to troops without thorough knowledge of the situation. Moreover, Herr Kube's attention might be directed to the fact that these criminals are primarily former Party members, previously convicted for poaching or some other slight offense. They are now given an opportunity to prove themselves and do so in spite of bloody losses and with great ardor.

In other words, this assignment was a means of blood cement by which offenders and recalcitrants could gain readmission into the good graces of the SS.

A revealing additional sidelight was provided by Walther Eppenhauer, Berger's adjutant, who stated in an interrogation (Summary No. 314 of 17 October 1946) that SS officers whom Berger disliked were usually transferred to the Dirlewanger Brigade. This was obviously a move to make them acquire blood cement and thus to become acceptable to him as firmly welded to the organization.

Of the "behind the scenes" men we have not caught all because some were not known as SS members. Accessories to SS crimes were to be found everywhere in Germany and especially in the vicinity of the concentration camps. The merchants who profited from deliveries of merchandise to concentration camps and who saw to it that the major portion of the delivered material reached the SS administrators in the form of graft were accomplices. And the civilian employes who calmly worked in the sight of abject misery on the concentration camp grounds—they also were accomplices. We have not caught them all, and we have not made a point of catching them all and especially in the recent trial we limited ourselves to the "inner circle" alone because they were beyond doubt the moving powers in this nasty business and were the main triggermen of the gang.

The master crime to which the SS was committed was the genocide of non-German peoples and the elimination by killing, in groups or singly, of Germans who were considered useless or disloyal. In effecting the two parts of this program Himmler demanded and received the cooperation of physicians and of German medical science. For this trend of research in Nazi Germany—namely, that toward developing scientific methods of destroying and preventing life—I have proposed the term "ktenology," the science of killing.

In the course of this ktenological research, methods of mass killing and mass sterilization were investigated and developed as well as methods for rapid and inconspicuous individual execution. Among the studies on mass sterilization some rather fantastic methods were proposed; for instance, Brack suggested non-conspicuous x-ray sterilization of conquered populations by building high-powered x-ray machinery into desks at which inhabitants of conquered nations would have to sit for five or ten minutes while filling out questionnaires. In this process they would all be sterilized. Research carried out on young male prisoners at Auschwitz concentration camp by Dr. Horst Schumann

showed that this method was far from inconspicuous because of the intense burns and tissue necrosis produced in the genital regions. At the same camp, with equally callous use of young female prisoners, sterilizing intrauterine injections were developed by Dr. Clauberg, with the assistance of Dr. Goebel, a pharmacologist, with the intention of having them administered during the course of a regular health inspection in conquered territories.

A committee of physicians and medical experts headed by Dr. Karl Brandt developed various methods of extermination by gas. At first carbon monoxide was used, later cyanide gas ("cyclon B") with occasional use of warfare gases for which this program supplied human experimental material. Of the individual methods of inconspicuous execution, which were usually carried out in camp hospitals by medical personnel, the most widely used method was the intravenous injection of phenol or gasoline. This, however, left a tell-tale odor with the corpse which made it an undesirable means of executing prominent prisoners or high-ranking Nazi Party personnel where secrecy was essential.

The triumph of that part of ktenological research aimed at finding a method of inconspicuous execution which would produce autopsy findings indicative of death from natural causes was the development of intravenous injections of a suspension of live tubercle bacilli which brought on acute miliary tuberculosis within a few weeks. This method was produced by Dr. Heissmeyer, who was one of Dr. Gebhardt's associates at the SS hospital of Hohenlychen.

As a means of further camouflage so that the SS at large would not suspect the purpose of these experiments, the preliminary tests for the efficacy of this method were performed exclusively on children imprisoned in the Natzweiler concentration camp.

This perversion of the role of the physician in Nazi Germany extended beyond the SS. Dr. James C. White told me that on German submarines it was the physician's duty to execute trouble makers among the crew by lethal injections. The pattern of this activity, however, was set by the SS and flourished in no other organization of the Third Reich as generally and in as high echelons as in the SS.