The Hunt for Lost Blood:
Nazi Germanization Policy in Occupied Europe

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“Logic may indeed be unshakable, but it cannot withstand a man who is determined to live.”

–Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

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Abstract

Throughout the Second World War, the National Socialist regime enacted a wide-ranging campaign to enhance the German nation by assimilating conquered populations into its demographic structure. At the axis of this multifaceted enterprise stood the Re-Germanization Procedure, or WED – a special program designed to absorb "racially valuable" foreigners into the German body politic by sending them to live with host families in the very heart of the Third Reich. The following dissertation provides the first ever study of the Re-Germanization Procedure and examines the momentous influence this initiative exerted over Nazi policy-making in occupied Europe. It is a story of the nexus between popular opinion on the home front and imperialism abroad, a fresh inquiry into the dynamics of German rule and their basis in the experiences of ordinary human beings, a kaleidoscopic portrait detailing a signature aspect of the National Socialist era that has largely eluded the scrutiny of historical analysis. The WED created a space where German and non-German civilians could articulate their understandings of race, community, and national belonging from within the settings of everyday life. Drawing on methodological tools from the fields of critical race studies and postcolonial theory, my research probes the extraordinary degree to which their interactions with state actors, and with each other, helped shape the classification of indigenous peoples across the length and breadth of Hitler's empire – a place where identity politics often meant the difference between life and death. By situating this process within a global context of nation-building and colonialism, my project reveals an unfamiliar side of an infamous epoch in order to show how, under the wartime Third Reich, discourses of race came to function not just as an impetus for genocidal violence, but as a transformative framework of inclusion.

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A Note on the Names of Places and People

As any historian of twentieth-century East-Central Europe will readily admit, the issue of place names raises all sorts of practical difficulties. With so many villages, towns, cities, topographical features, and regions having changed hands and official designations several times between 1918 and 1945, it is often unclear which version to adopt while remaining consistent, especially since rival nationalities employed their own usages even when they did not possess formal sovereignty over a given territory. I have elected to retain the native titles listed in English-language international maps as of August 31, 1939 – the day before the outbreak of the Second World War – albeit with the proper phonetic marks (in the case of Czechoslovakia, as of March 14, 1939, the day before the German takeover of that country). It is my belief that this convention – using appellations from the interwar period instead of their alternative wartime or postwar forms – most effectively balances the often conflicting interests of accuracy and clarity, even when the area in question belonged to Prussia, the Second German Reich, or the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy before 1918. So, for example, the Slovenian city of Maribor, which once lay within the borders of the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia, will be denoted as such throughout the text, despite the fact that German-speakers had always known it as Marburg an der Drau – a name the Nazis restored in 1941. To be sure, there are several exceptions to this general rule. For the sake of convenience, I refer to the cities of Warsaw, Danzig, Prague, and Kiev (as opposed to Warszawa, Gdańsk, Praha, and Kyiv) because of the greater familiarity these counterparts hold for English readers. The same principle applies for the concentration camp at Auschwitz (Oświęcim). To preserve a more exact sense of verisimilitude with the time period under discussion, however, my footnotes maintain the spellings of occupied locales as they appear in German sources.

The use of personal names also comes with a number of complicating factors attached. It has often been impossible to reproduce original monikers with full precision, in part due to frequent misspellings, though mainly because the Germans usually did not include special characters in their documentation and sometimes recorded multiple entries for the same person. In other instances, people were compelled to Germanize their first names, surnames, or both (though some chose to do this). I have decided to replicate these formats while making slight modifications when appropriate (such as inserting patronymic endings). In accordance with the strictures of German data protection laws (*Datenschutz*), the names of contemporary private individuals have either been altered or anonymized insofar as information concerning their experiences, activities, and whereabouts during the war stems from my research in German archives. However, I do not adhere to this standard when it concerns evidence gathered from repositories located outside the Federal Republic of Germany.

List of Abbreviations

NSDAP	*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* – National Socialist German Workers' Party
SS	*Schutzstaffel* – Protective Squadron
WED	*Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren* – Re-Germanization Procedure
RKFDV	*Reichskommission für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* – Reich Commission for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity
RKF	*Stabshauptamt der Reichskommission für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* – Staff Main Office for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity
RuSHA	*Rasse- und Siedlunghauptamt-SS* – SS Race and Resettlement Main Office
SD	*Sicherheitsdienst* – Security Service of the SS
RSHA	*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – Reich Security Main Office
EWZ	*Einwandererzentralstelle* – Central Immigration Office
UWZ	*Umwandererzentralstelle* – Central Emigration Office
VoMi	*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* – Ethnic German Liaison Office
HSSPF	*Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer* – Higher SS and Police Leader
DVL	*Deutsche Volksliste* – German Ethnic Registry
RMdI	*Reichsministerium des Innern* – Reich Ministry of the Interior
NSV	*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* – National Socialist People's Welfare
RNS	*Reichsnährstand* – Reich Food Estate
RPA	*Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP* – Racial Policy Office of the NSDAP
HJ	*Hitlerjugend* – Hitler Youth
BDM	*Bund Deutscher Mädel* – League of German Maidens
NSF	*Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft* – National Socialist Women's League
DFW	*Deutsches Frauenwerk* – German Women's Work

Introduction

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."

–William Isaac Thomas

"Domination is a relationship."

–Patrick Wolfe

By the late summer of 1942, Jan Masurek had had enough. As German armies began their fateful push toward Stalingrad, Jan worked as a chimney-sweep in the town of Esslingen am Neckar in southeastern Germany, making his own meager contribution to the war effort and voicing patriotic support for the Nazis' crusade to build a "Thousand-Year Reich" from the ashes of a conquered Europe. "I am proud to have become a citizen of such a high-culture people as the Germans," he declared, "shoulder to shoulder, we show the world what German power means." Yet Jan was also stuck in a precarious position brought on by the dangers of his trade. Noxious chimney fumes had taken a terrible toll on his health, giving him constant nosebleeds and respiratory problems, and an on-the-job accident had left him with one lame hand. On another occasion, after falling from a rooftop, he suffered a head wound so grievous he was sure it "cost me almost half of my blood." Professing his faith in the German cause, Jan nevertheless dreaded what might happen if future mishaps rendered him incapable of performing his duties. He had already appealed to authorities in Stuttgart four times for a transfer to another occupation, yet each time his requests were denied. His German neighbors did not offer any solace either, nor did his employer, Herr Abele: "He says everything about me is awful… I will surely go crazy if things continue like this." To make matters worse, Abele had recently filed a complaint with the police in which he accused Jan of intentionally injuring himself to avoid labor service. Fearing arrest, Jan posted a frantic letter to SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Dongus on August 25, 1942 and begged him to intervene: "I left my family behind to work as a volunteer, to be a man. I have rights like any other citizen of the Reich… I did not come here to die or return home as a cripple." He had hitherto endured all hardships with fortitude, he assured Dongus, "for I like my mother was raised as a German." But Jan was also at the end of his tether. "If you cannot help me then no-one can," he wrote, "and I will then have no choice but to jump from the roof and meet my end… I would rather be dead than be a chimney-sweep."[1]

What possible connection could a lowly figure like Jan Masurek have with a powerful SS functionary like Walter Dongus at the height of the Second World War? The anecdote is all the more puzzling given that, despite his assertions to the contrary, Jan was not a German in the traditional sense of

[1] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives (=USHMMA) 15.021M/5/35/70-71: Masurek to Dongus, August 25, 1942.

the word: he originally hailed from western Poland, did not speak German as his mother-tongue, and had never obtained formal German citizenship. The answer lies in the blood spilled on the streets of Esslingen during Jan's fall. According to Dongus and his colleagues, Jan was a member of the "Nordic race," and his "valuable stock" would help plant the seeds for a transformative utopian society. Small though it was, Jan and Abele had a role to play in the revolutionary aspirations of National Socialism, for the Nazis had selected them to take part in the Re-Germanization Procedure (*Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren*, WED) – a special resettlement and assimilation program that eventually encompassed around one hundred thousand foreign nationals whom the SS declared "racially suitable" and inserted into villages, towns, and cities across the Greater German Reich. The "recovery" of this "lost German blood," so the argument went, would not only enrich the biological makeup of the German *Volk*, but weaken the life force of non-German ethnic groups and thereby hasten their ultimate destruction. Yet if the Nazis had classified Jan as a "desirable population increase" and granted him preferential status, why was he in such a hazardous and desperate predicament in the summer of 1942? Why did he feel compelled to close his letter to Dongus with the ominous line "today I live, but tomorrow I may be dead"? Was he or was he not a German?

The following dissertation explores these questions of identity and belonging under National Socialist rule by presenting the first full-length study of the Re-Germanization Procedure. It tells the story of Masurek, Abele, Dongus and hundreds of thousands of others who participated in the WED in order to shed light on a crucial feature of the wartime Third Reich that has rarely been examined in depth. Between 1939 and 1945, the Nazis oversaw the largest and most radical campaign of cultural assimilation in modern history; all across the European landmass, from the Atlantic coast to the Ukrainian steppe, over six and a half million people became "Germans" in one way or another. The WED comprised just one aspect of this mammoth undertaking, but it was an enormously influential template, for what began as a relatively small, localized affair soon grew into something far more epic: a continent-wide crusade of "racial reclamation" known as the "hunt for good blood." Yet despite the magnitude and far-reaching significance of this endeavor, we still know precious little about it. Although scholars have left us with a sophisticated and voluminous literature on the Holocaust and the atrocities committed by Hitler's regime more generally, few have extended the same degree of scrutiny to the integrative dimension of Nazi imperialism – the wide-ranging attempt to absorb outsiders into "Germandom" (*Deutschtum*) instead of excluding or annihilating them. Without accounting for the former, however, it is impossible to comprehend the latter. As an instrument for the simultaneous pursuit of "positive" and "negative" biopolitical aims, the Re-Germanization Procedure offers a fruitful and illustrative medium for rectifying this imbalance. It stood at the intersection of a vast network of resettlement schemes – the "cleansing" of indigenes from annexed frontier regions, the mass impressment of foreign nationals as forced laborers, the "consolidation" of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) living outside the pre-war borders of the Reich – and

therefore provides novel insights into the classification and subsequent treatment of subject populations throughout occupied Europe. Because it depended on the direct engagement of civilians, moreover, the WED opens up a unique window into how ordinary people responded and contributed to the racializing project of National Socialism at home and abroad – a factor which, along with the huge numbers involved, underscores the need to revise, challenge, and move beyond prevailing interpretations of what the Nazis called *Volkstumspolitik*, or ethnic policy.

From the end of the Second World War right up through to the present, the historiography on this topic has been dominated by a decidedly functionalist paradigm that construes the practice of Germanization, or re-Germanization, as a fundamentally utilitarian ruse, a convenient smoke-screen contrived to mask the subordination of ideological goals to the "pragmatic" imperatives of political stability, economic production, and military expansion. In his pioneering survey of the SS resettlement apparatus, first published in 1957, historian Robert Koehl concluded that Nazi racial ideology was essentially a "red herring" used to clothe naked territorial aggression and outsized power-political ambitions.[2] Martin Broszat proposed a similar contention in a pair of monographs released in the 1960s, arguing that the mandate to categorize the inhabitants of occupied Poland eschewed racist and ethnocentric principles and actually resembled the more liberal approach to minorities employed by earlier Prussian and German governments (though this same "tolerance" did not apply to Jews, of course).[3] Nazi Germanization, in other words, amounted to little more than a time-honored strategy of divide and rule. A decade later, Jan Gross elaborated on these ideas in his work *Polish Society under German Occupation* (1979), where he spoke of a "manipulation" or "modification of racial theory" that arose "out of pure necessity" to "accommodate pragmatic requirements of day-to-day administration." According to Gross, "No sensible policy of collaboration could be articulated by spokesmen of a simultaneously revolutionary and racist doctrine of society. Thus, in order to allow for the participation of some segments of the conquered population, the Nazis proceeded to re-define race so as to make such participation acceptable to themselves."[4]

An additional variation on this theme emerged from the wave of new scholarship on Nazi demographic engineering that appeared in the mid-to-late 1990s. Inspired by the theoretical suppositions of Zygmunt Bauman and the groundbreaking research of Götz Aly, a generation of German scholars such as Michael Esch, Bruno Wasser, and Markus Leniger set out to frame the classificatory endeavors and population transfers managed by the SS within a broader push for socio-economic modernization

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[2] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

[3] Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik, 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961); Martin Broszat, *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik* (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1963).

[4] Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 39, 195-196, 198.

orchestrated by academically-trained and career-minded "experts," whose motives had far more to do with a ruthless ethos of "hyper-rationality" than notions of racial supremacy.[5] Although not specifically aligned with this school of thought, John Connelly advanced a comparable explanation in his 1999 article "Nazis and Slavs" – a piece that effectively reiterated the seminal position outlined by Gross. For Connelly, German conduct toward non-Jewish ethnic groups in the Slavic countries of East-Central Europe represented "a textbook case of functionalism" and "ideological wavering," the upshot of an improvisatory "learning process" conditioned by diplomatic concerns and the manpower demands of an economy at war.[6]

A number of young American historians have since replicated these findings and taken them a step further. Philip Rutherford asserts that *Volkstumspolitik* in western Poland constituted a form of "racial hocus-pocus" that arbitrarily transformed Poles into Germans "as if by magic" and "justified their continued presence" once large-scale expulsions eastward were no longer viable. In his view, "economic and military considerations evidently compelled the Nazi hierarchy to accept this obvious violation of its racial principles" and introduce a platform that "seemed to reconcile the real world with Nazi utopian ideals."[7] Shifting the focus of discussion away from Poland and toward Czechoslovakia, Chad Bryant and Tara Zahra also maintain that the Nazis' inability to deport non-Germans wholesale or procure enough recruits for their grandiose colonization plans led them to "settle on the more pragmatic policy of Germanizing people," discarding the ascriptive standards of ethnic and biological categories in favor of a national taxonomy organized around individual confession and declarations of political loyalty.[8] Because initial blueprints and intentions turned out to be unfeasible, "Priorities, as well as certain ideological principles, would have to be modified… Thus, the Czechs would have to become Germans." As a result, "The language of race simply gave a form of legitimacy to policies of inclusion and exclusion largely based on non-physiological attributes," revealing National Socialism to be "an ideological system with a hollow core."[9] Around the time Rutherford, Bryant, and Zahra published their studies, British historian

[5] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). For the work that first put Aly on the map, see Götz Aly and Karl-Heinz Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung. Volkszählen, Identifizieren, Aussondern im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1984). Also see Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1998); Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940-1941* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1993); Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit und Umsiedlungspolitik 1939-1945. Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Auslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006).

[6] John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 1-35.

[7] Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1940-1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 209-211, 216.

[8] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 173.

[9] Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 116, 150.

Mark Mazower applied roughly the same interpretation to virtually every country that fell within the Nazis' sphere of influence in his book *Hitler's Empire*:

> With almost no prior preparation, the Third Reich had to forge a political strategy for defending its gains… and shaping a future New Order for Europe as a whole. In these tasks, Nazi racial goals… mattered less than military, diplomatic, and economic considerations… Assimilation – the policy which was supposed to have been abandoned – was thus brought back, as supposedly watertight racial criteria were in fact merged with more old-fashioned cultural and political determinants of national belonging… as it turned out, the Nazi regime was forced to retreat from its hardline insistence on biology as a criterion of nationality.[10]

To be sure, this apparent consensus has not gone uncontested. Beginning with the 1991 publication of *The Racial State* by Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, a smaller yet nonetheless substantial contingent of scholars have increasingly disputed the validity of the functionalist thesis by insisting that the Nazis did in fact adhere to a genuine, intelligible, and premeditated ideological vision.[11] Detlef Brandes, perhaps the foremost authority on the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, sums up this divergent viewpoint as follows: "The goal of National Socialist policy-making was the creation of a 'Greater German Reich' built along racial lines, which obviously entailed the Germanization of people as well as space."[12] In her magisterial study of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office, Isabel Heinemann points out that there was no inherent opposition between economic or military mobilization and the fulfillment of racial-biological objectives.[13] Andreas Strippel likewise notes that conscripting and naturalizing foreign-born laborers and potential soldiers did not necessarily oblige Nazi officials to abandon their worldview: "On the contrary, the two went together hand in hand."[14] Gerhard Wolf steers an even more moderate middle course; while retaining Broszat's continuity thesis, he also warns that it would be a grave mistake to separate ideology from "governmentality" (*Herrschaftsrationalität*) when deliberating on the causes and development of Germanization policy in western Poland (or anywhere else for that matter).[15]

All of these works have proven invaluable for our understanding of the Third Reich; indeed, my own contribution would not be possible without them. Nevertheless, they also suffer from a number of serious flaws and blind spots. By overstating the sway of abstract metahistorical forces, the functionalist

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[10] Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 103, 183, 194.

[11] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). The central points of contention between these two camps correspond in many ways to the intentionalist versus functionalist debate historians of the Holocaust have become so familiar with, though it would be going too far to label those who favor an ideological interpretation as intentionalists.

[12] Detlef Brandes, *"Umvolkung, Umsiedlung, rassische Bestandsaufnahme". NS-"Volkstumspolitik" in den böhmischen Ländern* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 235.

[13] Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003).

[14] Andreas Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1939-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 284-285.

[15] Gerhard Wolf, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität. Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012).

model tends to rob individual human actors of free will and plot out narratives with a predetermined outcome. Even if one could distinguish between the instrumentalization of an idea and its sincere expression – a tricky task to begin with – the invocation itself is still an endorsement with consequences that cannot be foreseen. The problem with attributing Germanization solely to administrative expediency is that it assumes the Nazis acted in accordance with present-day conceptions of purposive or goal-oriented rationality, as if their beliefs were so ludicrous as to confound any other logical explanation. There is a strong tendency within the historiography to "anthropologize" the bizarre, metaphysical tenets of National Socialism in this way instead of treating them as the product of authentic lived experiences and a distinctive historical context.[16] The dispassionate technocratic aura of the Third Reich should not conceal the extent to which myth and fantasy continued to meet basic psychological needs and smooth over gaps in human knowledge during this period.[17] The actions of the Nazis, writes Monica Black, reveal quite starkly that "human beings are manifestly motivated by things that, although they may take the form of 'reasoned argument,' are entirely disconnected from reality."[18] No matter how outlandish they may sound to us now, these irrational precepts are just as salient as more readily discernible economic and political factors, which are obviously germane, yet cannot be cleanly extracted from their cultural milieu. The most important of these concepts for our purposes, the theoretical cornerstone of Nazi Germanization policy, is what I refer to as the myth of "lost German blood" – a belief that the most gifted and capable members of foreign nations (Slavs in particular) were actually the descendants of Germanic colonists from ages past who had supposedly forgotten their native ethnic roots. The myth of "lost German blood" was not cooked up by the Nazis to disguise a tactical reformation of ideological principles in light of exigent circumstances; it came about long before the birth of the National Socialist German Workers Party, let alone the outbreak of the Second World War. And yet historians have failed to acknowledge the extraordinary power of this mental construct because it does not conform to the (faulty) presumption that any sign of inclusivity toward non-Germans on the part of the Nazis must have been tantamount to an abdication of their racist creed.[19]

At the same time, we should be wary of any hypothesis that lumps the bulk of the weight on racial ideology – at least as it is usually delineated. The doctrine of National Socialism was neither

[16] This term was originally coined to describe how Western historians viewed aboriginal customs in colonial India; see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 105, 110-113.

[17] Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 99-100; A. Dirk Moses, "Genocide and Modernity," in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008), 175-176.

[18] Monica Black, *Death in Berlin: From Weimar to Divided Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 14.

[19] As Michael Fahlbusch points out, the Nazis' assertion that numerous East European countries had always belonged to the German sphere of influence "has not been properly acknowledged by current historiography and, in some cases, has even been denied"; see his article, "The Role and Impact of German Ethnopolitical Experts in the SS Reich Security Main Office," in *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919-1945*, eds. Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 46.

monolithic nor just a collection of blind prejudices and falsehoods, nor did it supply ready-made formulae for shaping public life. Translating its prescriptions into reality and spreading its message required the subjective mediation of adherents as well as prospective converts. As Alon Confino reminds us, "There were many truths in German society beyond ideology, and without them it would have been impossible to understand how ideology was believed in and constructed to begin with."[20] Along these lines, it is far more useful to think of Nazi ideology as a relatively open yet finite symbolic field – a miscellaneous aggregate of tropes, images, and representations encompassing a plurality of opinions and a range of accents.[21] While there can be no doubt that race occupied a central location within this ideational matrix, exaggerating its applicability as a register of analysis can yield a misleading picture. For one thing, the "racial state" paradigm endows Nazi race-thinking with a semblance of consistency and ubiquity it never possessed.[22] For another, there is always the danger that in reproducing Nazi rhetoric we end up imparting a superficial impression that "the Germans," "the Jews," "the Poles," and so forth were given homogeneous units of social cohesion (a phenomenon Christian Gerlach has dubbed the "ethnicization of history"), as opposed to the heterogeneous polities they actually were.[23] Although such descriptors are often useful and sometimes unavoidable, they do not automatically correspond to how people identified themselves, and can even lead to a kind of teleological profiling wherein collective labels govern a shared destiny (Poles resisted, Ukrainians collaborated, Czechs soldiered on cheerfully, etc.).[24]

Our chimney-sweep, Jan Masurek, to take but one example, considered himself German even though almost every typical nationality marker of the day would suggest he was Polish. His chosen affiliation highlights the fact that exclusive formats of race were far from the only vehicles of selfhood under the Third Reich, and the most prominent alternative frame of reference in this respect was undoubtedly the concept of the *Volk* (roughly translatable as people, nation, or ethnic group). While the Nazis clearly exploited the widespread resonance of this idea, it was at heart a cultural idiom of belonging that centered on language – the principal benchmark of ethnonational affiliation in continental Europe

[20] Alon Confino, "A World without Jews: Interpreting the Holocaust," *German History* 27, no. 4 (2009): 539-540.

[21] The concept of ideological fields originated with Pierre Bourdieu in his work *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 177-282. For an example of this approach, see Lutz Raphael, "Pluralities of National Socialist Ideology: New Perspectives on the Production and Diffusion of National Socialist Weltanschauung," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives*, eds. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 73-86.

[22] For a number of compelling arguments on why this is the case, see the report on the October 2009 conference "Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany," co-organized by Richard Wetzell of the German Historical Institute and Mark Roseman of Indiana University.

[23] The potential for this kind of fallacy is intensively discussed in Fredrik Barth's seminal volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Long Shore, IL: Waveland, 1998) [originally published in 1969]. For a comparable treatment, see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). The term comes from Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 255.

[24] As Zahra emphasizes, this tendency is especially rife within nationalist historiographies; see *Kidnapped Souls*, 8. Unfortunately, she too falls into the same trap by adopting Connelly's simplistic and inaccurate assertion that the Nazis treated Poles far worse than Czechs because the former resisted and the latter did not; see Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs," 22-23.

dating back at least to the middle of the nineteenth century.[25] The tensions inherent to this discrepancy between race and *Volk*, as we will see, became a signature characteristic of Nazi rule throughout the far-flung domains of Hitler's empire.

The chief limitation of previous scholarship on National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik*, however, is a restrictive focus on the inner workings of the state that ignores the perspective and agency of civilians by discounting them as essentially passive subjects. Such a glaring omission can be credited in large part to the lack of attention paid thus far to the Re-Germanization Procedure, which pertinent studies have either mentioned only in passing, conflated with other related ventures, or overlooked entirely. When it comes to those people whom the Nazis enrolled in the WED, the standard narrative we currently have is a one-sided account of coercion and victimization, with SS officers like Walter Dongus and German employers like Herr Abele playing the role of omnipotent antagonists. While this rendering surely approximates the experiences of many WED candidates, it does not tell us the whole story by a long shot. German citizens who volunteered to serve as hosts, on the other hand, are not granted very much clout either. Although a number of eminent historians have crafted brilliant studies of German popular opinion as it pertained to the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," the "T4" euthanasia program, and the persecution of political dissidents, this rich body of work does not encompass public reactions to the Nazi's multifaceted campaign of "racial consolidation."[26] If we go by established conclusions regarding these other arenas of public engagement, it is not hard to see why ordinary Germans come across as disempowered and venal pawns. With regard to foreign affairs as a whole, Ian Kershaw has argued that "popular opinion was practically devoid of relevance" and "could make itself felt only in the most muted way." Among all social classes, he claims, "material conditions directly affecting the everyday lives of the population provided the most continuous, and usually the most dominant, influence upon the formation of public opinion."[27] According to the more recent assessment of Jill Stephenson, it is "self-evident" that Germans were "not in a position to influence government policy or its implementation" and "for the most part motivated by parochial self-interest… rather than by any appreciation of government strategic thinking or ideological imperatives."[28] What we have here is an orthodox top-down interpretation that divorces

[25] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 122.

[26] See e.g. Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde.Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Bund, 1982); Martin Broszat, "Resistenz und Widerstand. Eine Zwischenbilanz des Forschungsprojekts 'Widerstand und Verfolgung in Bayern 1933-1945,'" in *Nach Hitler. Der schwierige Umgang mit unserer Geschichte*, eds. Hermann Graml and Klaus-Dietmar Henke (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1987); David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[27] Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 373, 376, 383-385.

[28] Jill Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front: Württemberg under the Nazis* (New York: Humbledon Continuum, 2006), x.

political decision-making from the very people it intended to affect, obscuring their impact on the world around them.

This dissertation takes a different approach, one that borrows the techniques of critical race studies and postcolonial theory to present an integrated cultural history of Nazi Germanization policy from above and below.[29] It proceeds from the contention that, while individual human beings do not enjoy absolute freedom, there is something to be said for their ability to influence the course of larger historical events. Likewise, although agents of the modern state may indeed be "at least one step – and often several steps – removed from the society they are charged with governing," they are still at least somewhat sensitive to the concerns of their constituents, even under the oppressive conditions of a totalitarian dictatorship.[30] My methodology, in short, does not presume an overly neat dichotomy between state and non-state actors. Instead, it interrogates the translation of ideas into policy by tracing the patterns of compliance, dissent, and negotiation created by their interactions and posing a series of questions that have yet to be answered sufficiently despite their critical importance. Who determined whether a given person was German or non-German? What sorts of criteria informed these decisions? Why did ordinary civilians become so heavily involved in processes of ethnic and racial classification? How did official definitions of Germanness overlap with and contradict popular ones?

Given the centrality of racism to the National Socialist worldview, it may seem surprising that historians of the period have not taken greater advantage of the knowledge to be gained from critical race studies – a discipline devoted to unmasking the statutory and discursive underpinnings of this very phenomenon. Most readers are probably familiar with the notion that race is a rigidly objective, inborn, and static format of identity grounded in natural physiological traits (skin color most notably), whereas ethnicity is a "softer," subjective, and more flexible category that allows for adaptation and variance. Although ethnic groups have been essentialized with similarly bigoted terminology and frequently fallen victim to savage outbursts of sectarian violence, they are not usually envisioned as incarnations of the same type of allegedly intrinsic and immutable deficiencies that racism presupposes on the basis of appearance.[31] What this breakdown neglects, however, as numerous scholars have acknowledged, is the

[29] My approach very much fits in line with suggestions recently aired by Monica Black, Jennifer Evans, Alon Confino, Amos Goldberg, Jack Halberstam, Regina Mühlhäuser, and Jürgen Zimmerer in the forum "Cultural History and the Holocaust," *German History* 31, no. 1 (2013): 61-85. The proposal for an integrated history combining German and non-German perspectives comes from Saul Friedländer's two-volume opus, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2007).

[30] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 76.

[31] Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 57-68. On the underlying features shared by discourses of racism and ethnocentrism, see Eric D. Weitz, "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 1-29. These definitions of race and ethnicity are paraphrased and synthesized from Baumann's work as well as Weitz's monograph *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 21-22.

fact that race operates first and foremost as a product of social construction, not biology.[32] The renowned anthropologist and historian Ann Laura Stoler has convincingly postulated that the enduring appeal of race-thinking lies precisely in how it oscillates between coordinates of fixity and fluidity. While purporting to denote unchanging behavioral characteristics, racial signifiers always remain subject to alteration because they are closely bound up with other malleable indices of membership like class, gender, and religion.[33] An appreciation of plasticity and constructedness opens our eyes to the possibility that, rather than acting solely as a mechanism of discrimination, race can also serve an inclusive purpose: to consolidate people from disparate ethnic and national backgrounds under the banner of a single collectivity. This was the cardinal aim around which Nazi Germanization policy gravitated.

If such a sizable piece of the equation has heretofore gone unnoticed, previous inquiries have almost entirely failed to account for an additional noteworthy dynamic. There is a strong tendency within the literature on the wartime Third Reich to depict taxonomies of race as something imposed from outside by the legal edifice of hegemonic state power, which they no doubt were. Yet as historians of colonial Latin America have long recognized, systems of racial classification have a way of being shaped by the very subjects they are meant to classify.[34] Anthropologist Richard Jenkins has likewise demonstrated that practices of interior self-identification and external categorization by the state operate through a complementary interchange that can create points of overlap as well as sources of friction.[35] These observations ring equally true for German-occupied Europe during the Second World War; by articulating, internalizing, manipulating, and contesting Nazi racial categories, ordinary civilians were ultimately able to exercise a measure of control over their content and parameters. In this sense, race became an elective and performative framework of community-building that could reinforce as well as subvert the structures of National Socialist rule, opening up vertical avenues of cultural integration and social mobility that would not have been available otherwise, yet simultaneously blurring the line between German and non-German in a manner that undermined the classificatory enterprise as a whole. If we accept that official viewpoints and popular attitudes regarding foreigners were not stagnant, uniform, or totally negative, then we must also concede that subaltern ethnic groups could acquire a certain amount

[32] Ian F. Haney-López, "The Social Construction of Race," in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000), 165-168.

[33] Ann Laura Stoler, "Racial Histories and Their Regimes of Truth," *Political Power and Social Theory* 11 (1997): 197-198. In proposing this theory, Stoler draws in part from George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 234-269. Also see Etienne Balibar, "Is There a Neo-Racism?" in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, eds. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991), 22.

[34] See Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara, "Racial Identities and Their Interpreters in Colonial Latin America," in *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*, eds. Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 2-4; Karen Vieira Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis, and the State in Colonial Quito* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 10-14, 169-173. For older classic treatments, see Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, MA: Little-Brown, 1967); John K. Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1978).

[35] Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: SAGE, 1997) 142-164.

of autonomy with which to try to improve their lot in life, that there was a considerable degree of "cooperation between the dominant and the dominated, the occupiers and the occupied."[36] All of this is to say that National Socialist ideology cannot fully explain how the Germanization campaign played out and evolved at the grassroots level. In settings across Germany and the occupied territories, ordinary people fashioned the racial contours of their social landscape through understandings of kinship that did not always match those endorsed by the architects of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* – who often disagreed with each other on such issues in any case, as we will see. My dissertation therefore focuses on exactly these nodes of interface and divergence, exploring how intellectual and political elites devised notions of race "in the lab" as well as how ordinary people fleshed out applications of race-thinking in proximity to one another "on the ground."

In keeping with this tack, much of my analysis takes the form of an *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life), concentrating specifically on what contemporaries referred to as the *Volksgemeinschaft*, or "ethnic community" – the Nazis' projected vision of a racially pure and egalitarian social utopia for all "persons of German blood."[37] In recent years, a growing number of historians have furnished us with a wealth of knowledge on how ordinary Germans contributed to the realization of this conceptual template.[38] Be that as it may, existing research has yet to deal with the question of whether non-Germans managed to find a place within the ranks of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, let alone investigated how they might have done so. As Norbert Götz has suggested, the term *Volksgemeinschaft* "did not just stand for different nations; it became a vehicle for the struggle over different worldviews among people of [alleged] German extraction."[39] With millions of foreign laborers pouring into the Reich from all over Europe, the demographic complexion of Germany changed dramatically during the Second World War, bringing Germans and non-Germans into close contact on a much larger scale and within a much shorter timespan than ever before. Mass immigration not only imbued older debates and controversies over the boundaries of the nation with an unprecedented relevance, but forced Germans to confront the choice between assimilation and segregation on a daily basis – a pressure that was all the more acute for those who

[36] Interestingly, although the genesis of this project long predates it, Alf Lüdtke has recently called for further research on how the fallout from Nazi resettlement operations was "produced and encountered in interactions" between Germans and non-Germans. In his view, such interactions reveal that "the study of face-to-face settings and configurations is central." See his essay "Explaining Forced Migration," in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, eds. Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16-18.

[37] For an introduction to the Alltagsgeschichte method, see Alf Lüdtke, ed., *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, "The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter," *Journal of Modern History* 80 (June 2008): 358-378.

[38] Excellent overviews on this literature can be found in Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, eds., *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009); Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto, eds., *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[39] Norbert Götz, "German-Speaking People and German Heritage: Nazi Germany and the Problem of Volksgemeinschaft," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 59.

participated in the WED. Candidates for re-Germanization had a say in this decision too, which usually had to do with whether or not they were willing to renounce their native cultural heritage. Hence, in contrast to many iterations of the *Alltagsgeschichte* method, my approach does not unduly foreground the motive force of material privilege or reduce membership in the "ethnic community" to an exchange wherein people traded acquiescence for personal benefit. Practices of inclusion and exclusion often did but did not necessarily revolve around socio-economic interests, and civilians who got caught up in the WED could not simply be "bought off" with goods and services. They were not always or even primarily driven by incentives of convenience or what one historian has referred to as "the inherent blinkered self-centeredness of most human beings."[40] Indeed, while some inductees refused to forsake their national upbringing even when threatened with imprisonment and death, others volunteered to lay down their lives on behalf of Germandom. Such impassioned responses highlight the error of drawing a sharp divide between conviction and opportunism or assuming that non-Germans could not possibly have put their faith in Nazism or truly thought of themselves as "ethnic comrades" (*Volksgenossen*) without the expectation of substantial reward.

Instead of shrinking the complexity of identity politics to fit a Marxian paradigm, my dissertation tackles this issue from a somewhat unconventional angle. Although it has become customary for scholars to conceive of nationalism as the expression of an "imagined community" – in which propaganda inspires feelings of political and cultural solidarity among people who never actually meet – we should not underestimate the importance of interpersonal relationships in promoting national and racial consciousness.[41] The success of the "hunt for good blood" was contingent upon convincing German citizens and "racially valuable" foreigners to forge emotional attachments and bonds of fellowship with each other through deeds and dealings so banal as to go almost undetected, through face-to-face interactions and intimate encounters kindled by the rhythms, rituals, and etiquette of the quotidian. Coming to grips with this disturbing reality enables us to ascertain the extent to which race infiltrated the fabric of daily life, all the while enabling us to restore agency to people normally pigeon-holed as bystanders, collaborators, or victims. The construction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* hinged on the informal politics of everyday social relations; the Re-Germanization Procedure offers us a textbook illustration of how this process transpired.[42]

In probing the diverse range of meanings assigned to race and *Volk* under the wartime Third Reich, my study also seeks to move beyond traditional readings of popular opinion during this era. Rather

[40] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 357.

[41] This trend began, of course, with Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

[42] In this respect, my approach draws on Andrew Stuart Bergerson's understanding of the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a moral community based on what he calls "conviviality"; see *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

than bracketing the topic solely in terms of ideological dissemination from above and reception (or a lack thereof) from below, it situates patterns of identity formation and community-building at the crux of a reciprocal dialogue between and among state and non-state actors. By exposing the involvement of ordinary Germans in the persecution, expropriation, and murder of those foreigners whom the Nazis branded "undesirable," historians have largely overcome the misleading propensity to describe them as indifferent spectators to the brutality of Hitler's regime.[43] However, much less thought has been devoted to the ways in which Germans sought to incorporate outsiders into the *Volksgemeinschaft* in addition to barring or purging them from it, not to mention how these local practices of inclusion and exclusion molded the tenor of policy-making at home and abroad. The Nazis were hardly immune to manifestations of public sentiment, especially when they conveyed actionable intelligence on vernacular typologies of Germanness in the provinces. The formulation of racial and national discourses at the grassroots level reverberated throughout the corridors of state power, conferring legitimacy upon government initiatives yet also prompting numerous concessions and instances of realignment – both within Germany itself as well as outside of its borders.[44] The WED functioned as a conduit for this sequence of feedback, transmission, and accommodation, a site of convergence between microhistorical contexts and macrohistorical trends. As such, it demands that we forego thinking of the Reich and the *Ausland* as sequestered spaces, track the spread of ideas and methods across the European landmass, and adopt a comprehensive approach to National Socialist Germanization policy that precludes unwarranted comparisons between regions. It will then be possible to demonstrate how the attitudes and behaviors of civilians on the home front, German and non-German alike, helped steer the direction of Nazi empire-building in the occupied territories.

Such an undertaking obliges us to widen our temporal and geographical aperture, not just to uncover where the impetus behind the "hunt for good blood" came from to begin with, but to grasp its defining properties. Over the past decade or so, scholars have increasingly embraced a chronology that positions the wartime atrocities of the National Socialist regime as an outgrowth of European colonialism. From this perspective, the roots of the Holocaust are said to lie in the late nineteenth century, a "starting point" with "fundamentally similar concepts of space and race" and a "shared governing structure," each of which gradually replaced the liberal and religious inclination to "elevate" or "improve" non-whites – lukewarm though it had always been – with a genocidal mindset that the Nazis "brought home" to

[43] See e.g. Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Frank Bajohr, *'Arisierung' in Hamburg. Die Verdrängung der jüdischen Unternehmer 1933-1945* (Hamburg: Christians, 1997); Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007); Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[44] As has been amply demonstrated by Thomas Pegelow Kaplan in *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Europe.[45] The argument itself is not exactly new, though only recently has it triggered a vibrant back-and-forth debate with dramatic implications for modern German historiography.[46] Nevertheless, while the innovative research generated in the wake of this "colonial turn" has deeply enriched our comprehension of the Third Reich, it can also be extremely reductive and tendentious when taken too far, particularly if one concentrates only on Germany's overseas dominions, which were no more or less violent on the whole than those of any other European maritime empire.[47] To reduce the singular catastrophe of Nazism to the culmination of a single long-term trajectory relativizes its historical distinctiveness and takes for granted the existence of a "homogenized coloniality" that likewise disregards the peculiarities of the colonial experience at any given place and time.[48] Such a portrayal also rests on the shaky premise that the National Socialists jettisoned earlier forms of cultural assimilation altogether.

There is no reason to throw the baby out with the bathwater, however. When coupled with a detailed understanding of Germany's much more homegrown tradition of continental imperialism, postcolonial theory can tell us a great deal about the animating engine of Nazi Germanization policy as well as the intriguing situations and encounters it produced.[49] None of this means reverting to outmoded depictions of a unique German *Sonderweg* (special path) or timeless *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East); on the contrary, it compels us to acknowledge that colonial hierarchies are far from inimitable and

[45] Jürgen Zimmerer, "Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archaeology of Genocide," in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 53-54; Pascal Grosse, "What Does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism? A Concepual Framework," in *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, eds. Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 118. For comparable interpretations, see Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practice of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Enzo Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence* (New York: New Press, 2003); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[46] Raphael Lemkin coined the term genocide to capture the unprecedented nature of the Holocaust, but he also included episodes of colonial mass violence under the same rubric; see David Furber, "Near as Far in the Colonies: The Nazi Occupation of Poland," *International Historical Review* 26, no. 3 (September 2004): 543-544. Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon argued that the Nazis merely brought home all the racist attitudes and brutal administrative practices that had pervaded the colonial world for centuries; see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review, 2001) [originally published in 1955]; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 2004) [originally published in 1963]. In a similar vein, Hannah Arendt saw European governance in the colonies as a kind of laboratory for developing authoritarian political structures that later came to fruition under fascism; see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2004), 288 [originally published in 1951]. Working from a more strictly historical methodology, Woodruff D. Smith posited that the Nazis successfully combined the *Weltpolitik* of the Kaiserreich with pre-existing impulses towards continental expansion; see *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[47] Criticisms of this approach can be found in George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 69; Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, "Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz," *Central European History* 42, no. 2 (June 2009): 279-300; Winson Chu, Jesse Kauffman, and Michael Meng, "A Sonderweg through Eastern Europe? The Varieties of German Rule in Poland during the Two World Wars," *German History* 31, no. 3 (2013): 318-344.

[48] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 17, 26.

[49] On German continental imperialism, see Philipp Ther, "Deutsche Geschichte als imperiale Geschichte. Polen, slawophone Minderheiten und das Kaiserreich als kontinentales Empire," in *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, eds. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 129-148.

do not by definition require vast oceanic distances between metropole and periphery.[50] As the late Susanne Zantop put it, "references to colonial competition and colonialist terminology suggest that colonialism forms an unconscious frame of reference for European power politics, a kind of scenario on which fantasies of national superiority and inferiority can be played out."[51] The reality of German rule over and cohabitation with millions of Slavic-speaking subjects in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generated almost exactly this type of fraught atmosphere all along the heterogeneous frontiers of East-Central Europe, where nationalist politicians pegged cosmopolitan inhabitants and those of mixed ancestry as being somehow "unnatural," yet also struggled nervously to bring them into the fold lest others stray from it as well – usually by trumpeting the inherent supremacy of German culture over that of their allegedly "primitive" rivals.[52] It is not all that hard to see how such an environment gradually led to the intertwining of ethnic and racial discourses, though the point to remember is that a certain complementarity linked the rhetorical strategies of nationalism and colonialism. This symbiotic relationship in turn reveals that the nationalization of European minorities did not differ all that much in essence from the assimilation of non-white aboriginals; even if the levels of coercion and structural violence employed to achieve this end were far greater in the overseas colonial realm, each phenomenon shared the same logic: subsume or be subsumed.[53] The myth of "lost German blood" emerged from this confluence of overlapping desires and anxieties, broadcasting a triumphant narrative of Germanic settlement in the East that relegated Slavs to a lower tier of civilization while advocating the "retrieval" of ostensibly wayward compatriots as a panacea that would stave off national regression.

My continuity thesis addresses how Germans living during the Nazi period interpreted this legacy of migration, ethnic conflict, and cultural fusion so as to unearth the derivative ideas and psychological dispositions that made the Re-Germanization Procedure intelligible and amenable in the first place. This line of inquest does not deduce causal connections across long stretches of time, nor does it look for origins, outcomes, or direct lines of development. Instead, it focuses on memory and historical consciousness as a prism for looking at how contemporaries visualized the past in order to give meaning to their present.[54] Though somewhat unorthodox, this strategy allows us to break down National Socialist

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[50] Robert L. Nelson, "Colonialism in Europe? The Case against Salt Water," in *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East: 1850 through the Present*, ed. Robert Nelson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1-2. Frederick Cooper likewise argues that the colonialism can occur within national territory; see *Colonialism in Question*, 26.

[51] Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 93-94.

[52] Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[53] Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and Cultural Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Racial Classification and History*, ed. E. Nathaniel Gates (New York: Garland, 1997), 208-246.

[54] Here I am borrowing to a certain extent from the work of Alon Confino, who devised a similar framework for exploring continuity through memory and historical consciousness in *Foundational Pasts: The Holocaust as Historical Understanding* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and *A World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

ideology into its component parts, distill the provenance of key discursive elements from within the realm of the collective imagination, and pinpoint which ones mattered to the practitioners of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* and which did not. Above all, it supplies us with the tools to dig beneath the surface level of analogies with prior genocidal episodes in the colonies and excavate a different layer of precedents and commonalities. "The Hunt for Lost Blood," therefore, is not just a story about Germany or even Europe during the Second World War; by foregrounding social practices of classification and assimilation as salient channels of continuity, it not only supplements a growing body of literature on the colonial inheritance of the wartime Third Reich, but locates the Re-Germanization Procedure within a broader transnational and global context.

In pursuit of the objectives outlined above, this dissertation incorporates a large and diverse collection of wartime records. As a study geared first and foremost around policy-making, this assemblage naturally includes the internal correspondence of the principal government agencies and ministries tasked with implementing the Re-Germanization Procedure, nearly all of which originally stems from multiple repositories housed all over Europe, yet is also available at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, the German Federal Archive in Berlin, and the Institute for National Remembrance in Warsaw. These documents supply a fascinating glimpse into the interior worlds of the men who orchestrated Nazi *Volkstumspolitik*, though given that they only impart a detached and blinkered perception of actual events on the ground, the use of material that conveys the perspectives of WED candidates and their German hosts has been absolutely essential. In that vein, my findings are heavily based on a large trove of letters these people exchanged with Nazi officials – a remarkably rich and descriptive source base that offers a microscope for peering into the lived realities of ordinary civilians as well as a metric for gauging how state actors responded to popular opinion. As an example of what scholars refer to as ego-documents, however, these letters must be interpreted with an appropriate measure of caution. They tell highly subjective and ambiguous narratives that cannot always be trusted or taken literally, the authors may have embellished or misrepresented what transpired, and it is incredibly difficult if not impossible to authenticate the sincerity of their statements or the veracity of their accounts with certainty. For all of these reasons, information extracted from the letters is carefully balanced against police surveillance reports gathered from a number of local and regional archives in western Germany. This material is further supplemented by biographical data stored in the holdings of the International Tracing Service as well as evidence gleaned from postwar inquiries conducted by the Nuremberg Military Tribunal and the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes.

In terms of structure, the dissertation is organized thematically and chronologically. Chapter One sets the stage by describing the background in which the Re-Germanization Procedure first took shape in

the months following the conquest of western Poland in 1939. Chapter Two gives a step by step account of the protocol the SS devised to select "persons capable of re-Germanization," or "re-Germanizables" (*Wiedereindeutschungsfähigen*) examining the intellectual trends and cultural mores that guided this process, the fierce internal disputes it unleashed, and the complex interactions it occasioned. Chapter Three reconstructs the everyday experiences of WED candidates during their tenure in the Reich with an eye toward exploring the multifaceted nature of their relationships with German neighbors and supervisors. Chapter Four delves into the gendered dimension of Nazi Germanization policy by surveying the domestic routines of female inductees and the distinctive circumstances they encountered. Chapter Five switches gears and returns to occupied western Poland to focus on the Deutsche Volksliste – a comprehensive system of ethno-racial classification that quickly grew into an enlarged assimilation campaign. Chapter Six charts the subsequent expansion of the Re-Germanization Procedure to countries in Central and Western Europe, namely Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, and Luxembourg. Chapter Seven chronicles how German civilians gradually convinced the Nazis to purge unwanted subjects from the WED while simultaneously encouraging them to press forward with their agenda. Chapter Eight recounts an ensuing shift to the kidnapping and Germanization of "racially valuable" foreign children. Chapter Nine deals with attempts made by forced laborers in the Reich to gain access to the WED, as well as the crucial sponsorship provided by their German employers, then looks at how this type of public engagement on the home front impacted the extension of the "hunt for good blood" into eastern Poland. Chapter Ten traces the evolution of Nazi Germanization policy during the later years of the Second World War, beginning in the Soviet Union and then working back across Europe. Finally, the conclusion offers a brief epilogue before presenting a recapitulation of my major arguments concerning the wider historical significance of the Re-Germanization Procedure.

Chapter One: Lost Blood in the East

"The sovereign race knows no territorial limits, and there are then no barriers to the highest power. The sovereignty of the Germanic race exists wherever there are racial Germans. The juridical fact of citizenship cannot abrogate the natural fact of membership in a race."

–Franz Neumann

"Continental imperialism truly begins at home."

–Hannah Arendt

On May 25, 1940, the two most powerful men in Nazi-occupied Europe embarked on a secret journey. In the immediate aftermath of a spectacular military victory over the Western Allies, Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler stood poised to transform their dreams into reality. Just a few days earlier, German troops had reached the English Channel and surrounded the enemy at Dunkirk. The fall of France and the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force were imminent, and the continent now lay prostrate at the feet of two men bent on reshaping it along racial lines. As they lounged aboard a special armored train, speeding through the pastoral landscape of southwestern Germany and ruminating over the destruction of entire nations, the conversation turned to a discussion of the future of Poland, which the Germans had conquered the previous autumn. Himmler took the opportunity to present his Führer with a six-page memorandum on ethnic policy entitled Some Thoughts on the Treatment of Alien Populations in the East. In this think piece, the Reichsführer-SS envisioned nothing less than a complete transformation of the region's demographic structure. He outlined a plan for the comprehensive "sifting and screening" of the indigenous inhabitants, whom he described as an "ethnic mish-mash" (*Völkerbrei*), a mélange of small splinter groups, most of them "racially inferior" Slavs fated to disappear from the earth. On this occasion, however, Hitler and Himmler did not have physical extermination in mind. "The basis of our considerations," Himmler emphasized, "must be to fish out the racially valuable from this mish-mash in order to bring them to Germany for assimilation."[1]

At first glance, this vignette seems counterintuitive. With good reason, we tend to associate the National Socialist regime with genocidal violence predicated on an exclusionary doctrine of biological racism, not with an inclusive form of empire-building that championed the assimilation of non-Germans as a fundamental goal. For the Nazis, we are told, race was destiny: it dictated everything about the intellect, personality, and behavior of every human being; by extension, any attempt to "improve" the disposition of "alien peoples" seemed pointless, even dangerous. "Germanization can only be applied to

[1] National Archives and Records Administration – Record Group 242 (=NARA) T-175/119/2646113ff: Himmler, "Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten," May 20, 1940. For more on this meeting, see Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 69-70.

soil and never to people," Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, "For what was generally understood by this word was only the forced outward acceptance of the German language… That this type of Germanization is in reality de-Germanization never became clear to our bourgeois national world."[2] Himmler vehemently denounced the nationality policies of earlier German governments in highly similar terms: "It is not our task to Germanize the East in the old sense, that is, to teach the people there the German language and German law, but rather to see to it that only people of purely Germanic blood reside in the East."[3] But if the Nazis insisted that non-Germans could never become German, then what exactly did Hitler and Himmler mean when they spoke of assimilation?

This question serves as the starting point for an inquiry into the genesis of National Socialist Germanization policy, a compass with which to guide our foray into the maze of underlying discursive wormholes it derived from and called upon. In order to grasp why the Nazis undertook to augment the German nation with millions of foreigners, it is first necessary to map out the historical landscape in which this phenomenon emerged. To that end, the present chapter traces the intellectual and cultural genealogy of the "hunt for good blood" backwards in time from the perspective of Nazi officials as they wrestled with unforeseen contingencies during the opening months of the Second World War. This journey entails the use of a comparative lens to reassess the much-debated "uniqueness" of the Third Reich in relation to previous German colonial endeavors as well as those of other European nations. In short, this chapter plots the chain of events that culminated in the launch of the Re-Germanization Procedure in the spring of 1940 by exploring how legacies of the past informed the initial development of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* in occupied Europe.

When the Germans entered Poland in the autumn of the previous year, they did not see themselves as invaders violating the sovereignty of a foreign country, but as liberators returning to what had been "rightful" German territory since time immemorial. Whether alluding to the exploits of Teutonic knights and Hanseatic traders during the Middle Ages, the missionary wanderings of Lutheran pastors during the Reformation, or the travels of learned scholars during the Age of Enlightenment, Germans of all stripes fervently believed that their nation had pursued a timeless "civilizing mission" (*Kulturträgertum*) in Eastern Europe, and they could point to a rich heritage of historical events to substantiate this belief.[4] With its images of pioneers bestowing law and culture to a wild and backward periphery, the *Kulturträgertum* inspired what Vejas Liulevicius has described as a colonial "mindscape" wherein "the East" existed as a virginal "no man's land" (*terra nullius*) – an experimental domain for

[2] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), 388-389.

[3] Library of Congress, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunal: Green Series, vol. IV* (=LOC/NMT), 623-624.

[4] Although this concept is much more commonly known as the *Drang nach Osten*, the use of that term would be a bit anachronistic given that it was in fact coined by Pan-Slav publicists in the mid-nineteenth century and did not even enter German discourse until the 1890s; see Henry Cord Meyer, *Drang nach Osten: Fortunes of a Slogan-Concept in German-Slavic Relations, 1849-1990* (Bern: Lang, 1996).

extralegal techniques of demographic engineering. It was a frontier myth, not dissimilar from the American concept of Manifest Destiny, or for that matter the triumphalist rhetoric of Western superiority touted by imperialists all over Europe, though it also shared just as much in common with other nationalist originary legends put forth to stake territorial claims on the basis of ancestral settlement.[5] While Germans likened their historic role in the East to the expansion of the great European maritime empires, they also highlighted its distinctive antiquity, attested to by the diaspora of ethnic German communities that dotted the landscape from the Black Sea to the Baltic, from the Volga River to the Oder – some of them dating all the way back to the medieval Holy Roman Empire, others tracing their lineage to the internal colonization drives of the absolutist Austrian, Prussian, and Russian monarchies between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.[6] To be sure, the *Kulturträgertum* was an invented tradition; German-speaking colonists and their descendants were far from the only organized group on the scene, the specific causes of these migrations varied considerably from one era to the next, and some preceded even the most elementary concept of a German nation by hundreds of years.[7] But it did have an unquestionable foundation in historical reality. The Nazis referred to Eastern Europe as the "German East" because it really had been a sphere of German cultural influence for almost a millennium before the outbreak of the Second World War.[8]

Speaking to a crowd in Poznań just days after the Polish army surrendered, the newly installed governor, Arthur Greiser, identified the restoration of this legacy as the first and most important aim of the Nazi regime in the annexed eastern provinces: "The land must soon get back its old face of high culture and the appearance of the people must also soon be the same as it once was… All land that was once in German hands… must be returned to German hands."[9] For Greiser, as for a great many other

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[5] Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-5; Gregor Thum, "Mythische Landschaften. Das Bild vom 'deutschen Osten' und die Zäsuren des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Traumland Osten. Deutsche Bilder vom östlichen Europa im 20 Jahrhundert*, ed. Gregor Thum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 181-211; Alan E. Steinweis, "Eastern Europe and the Notion of the 'Frontier' in Germany to 1945," in *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identities and Cultural Differences*, eds. Keith Bullivant, Geoffrey Giles, and Walter Pape (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 56-59. Also see Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 53. The "mindscape of the East" was first described by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius in *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151-175.

[6] Joachim Rogall, "Nachbarn in Europa," in *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas – Land der großen Ströme. Von Polen nach Litauen*, ed. Joachim Rogall.(Munich: Siedler, 1996), 2-5; Georg Bönisch, "Nach Osten wollen wir Reiten," in *Die Deutschen im Osten Europas. Eroberer, Siedler, Vertriebene*, eds. Annette Groβbongardt, Uwe Kluβmann, and Norbert F. Pötzl (Berlin: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2011), 31-34; Roger Bartlett and Bruce Mitchell, "State-Sponsored Immigration into Eastern Europe in the 18th and 19th Centuries," in *The German Lands and Eastern Europe: Essays on the History of their Social, Cultural, and Political Relations*, eds. Rogert Bartlett and Karen Schönwälder (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 100-102.

[7] Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 43, 195.

[8] Wolfgang Wippermann, *Die Deutschen und der Osten. Feindbild und Traumland* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2007), 53-55, 57; Klaus Zernack, "'Ostkolonisation' in universalgeschichtlicher Perspektive," in *Universalgeschichte und Nationalgeschichten*, eds. Gangolf Hübinger, Jürgen Osterhammel, and Erich Pelzer (Frieburg: Rombach, 1994), 105-116.

[9] Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 129-130.

Germans, the conquest of Poland brought with it the feeling that a great injustice had been rectified. They had finally overthrown the most painful imposition of the hated Versailles Treaty that followed German defeat in the First World War: the loss of territories that had been ruled by Germans since the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century. The corollary to this triumph was vengeance. The "mistakes of the past" would not be repeated; the "Polish Question" would be solved once and for all. In the ensuing months, SS killing squads, Wehrmacht soldiers, and local ethnic German militias executed some fifty thousand people in an effort to cripple the Polish nation by eradicating its leadership cadres – politicians, military officers, nobles, clergymen, and, above all, the intelligentsia.[10]

These murders marked the first step in a ruthless platform of systematic violence designed to ensure that the Poles would never again seize the hallowed soil of the German people. In a speech to the Reichstag on October 6, Hitler called for a "reorganization of ethnographic relationships" and "a resettlement of nationalities, to produce the development of better lines of demarcation."[11] What this meant, in effect, was ethnic cleansing, and the following day he conferred upon Himmler sweeping powers to "eliminate the harmful influence of ethnic aliens (*Fremdvölkische*) who constitute a danger to the Reich and the German ethnic community."[12] With this decree, the Reichsführer-SS obtained the mandate with which he would construct an empire that eventually stretched across all of occupied Europe, a vast umbrella network of government agencies known as the Reich Commission for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity (*Reichskommission für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKFDV).[13] Acting under the aegis of this conglomerate, in December 1939 the SS expelled 87,883 Polish civilians, many of them Jewish, from the three "incorporated eastern territories" – Wartheland (or the Warthegau), Danzig-West Prussia, and Upper Silesia – and dumped them unceremoniously in the so-called General Government (the rump of eastern Poland not formally annexed to the Reich). Over the course of the next year and a half, hundreds of thousands of people would be forced to travel the same route to ruin amid appalling brutality and enormous loss of life.[14]

The deportation of Poles in late 1939 is inexplicable without a precise comprehension of the "danger" that supposedly warranted removing Poles from the German sphere of influence, which in turn

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[10] Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 1-7. For overviews on the extreme violence of Nazi rule in Poland, see Richard C. Lukas and Norman Davies, *The Forgotten Holocaust: Poland under German Occupation, 1939-1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1997); Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces, and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918-1947* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998).

[11] For a transcript of the October 6 speech, see Philip Bouhler, ed., *Der grossdeutsche Freiheitskampf. Reden Adolf Hitlers, vol. I; September 1939 bis 10. März 1940* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1940), 67-100.

[12] USHMMA 15.015M/1/95/1-3*:* Hitler, "Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums," October 7, 1939.

[13] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 49-50.

[14] USHMMA 15.015M/3/227/1: "Aufstellung der aus dem Warthegau ausgesiedelten Polen vom 1.12.39 bis zum 20.1.41," unsigned, undated. On the deportation of Poles in general, see Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1940-1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

requires that we investigate what Robert Nelson has referred to as "the steady encroachment of overseas White/Not White 'race thinking' into the heart of the West/East divide in Europe."[15] From the late eighteenth century onward, a venerable canon of German intellectual figures had sought to legitimize hegemony over their eastern neighbors by casting them in the pejorative tropes Europeans typically associated with aboriginal peoples in Asia, Africa, and the Americas – stupidity, filth, laziness, depravity, savagery, and so on.[16] In their depictions of Slavs as non-Caucasian "tribes" incapable of mastering their habitat, German writers mobilized the racist iconography of colonialism to deny them the status of a modern self-governing nation and thereby refute their claims to political sovereignty. Scholars have recently coined the term "colonial proximity" as a label for this phenomenon, in which the discourses of an imperial power ruling over a contiguous foreign population must work overtime to establish (specious) differences between the colonizing Self and the colonized Other, constructing firm spatial and ethnic boundaries to compensate for the absence of geographic and racial ones.[17] By the dawn of the twentieth century, the degree of reciprocity that linked the idiom of national rivalries in the metropole with the language of racial politics in the colonies made it hardly unusual to equate European nations with discrete biological races and portray them as primordial organisms locked in a Darwinian life-or-death struggle over territory.[18] As a result, the German public increasingly came to view Poles and other Slavic ethnic groups not just as primitive brutes, but as crafty competitors bent on usurping their historic homeland.

The quintessential symbol for this "anxiety of reverse colonization" was the "Slavic Flood," a seemingly omnipresent topos in both the popular press as well as high-brow literature throughout the century and a half that preceded the rise of National Socialism. A variation on the age-old European fear of nomadic marauders from the Asian steppes, the Slavic Flood conjured memories of incursions by Huns, Mongols, and Turks in the distant past as well as more recent forebodings that the faceless masses of "the Orient" would soon overwhelm the global imperial order (the so-called Yellow Peril).[19] In the days of the Kaisers, these images merged in the guise of public outrage over the influx of millions of

[15] Robert L. Nelson, "Introduction: Colonialism in Europe? The Case Against Salt Water," in *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East: 1850 through the Present*, ed. Robert Nelson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

[16] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3-4, 357-360; Hubert Orlowski, *"Polnische Wirtschaft". Zum deutschen Polendiskurs der Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 347-369, David Pickus, *Dying with an Enlightening Fall: Poland in the Eyes of German Intellectuals, 1764-1800* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2007), 1-5.

[17] Kristin Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 8-11, 19-20. Also see Andrew Murphy, *But the Irish Sea Betwixt Us: Ireland, Colonialism, and Renaissance Literature* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 4-6.

[18] George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) 34, 45; Pascal Grosse, "What Does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism? A Conceptual Framework," in *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, eds. Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, Lora Wildenthal (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 121-122.

[19] On the "Slavic Flood," see David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: Norton, 2007), 244; Wippermann, *Die Deutschen und der Osten*, 40, 42. On the "Yellow Peril," see Heinz Gollwitzer, *Die Gelbe Gefahr. Geschichte eines Schlagworts, Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 8-9. On the notion of an "anxiety of reverse colonization," see Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Identity and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 108-110.

Polish laborers into the eastern marches of Prussia – a domestic controversy so explosive it prompted Otto von Bismarck to enact state-sponsored settlement programs to tip the demographic balance back in favor of the Germans and repel the "tidal wave of Slavdom."[20] The staggering death toll of the First World War and the consequences of the Russian Revolution gave these earlier premonitions an apocalyptic tenor they had previously lacked. German academics and publicists warned ceaselessly of a looming "inundation" by the "Slavic hordes of the East," pointing to the dangerous "population pressure" created by swarms of postwar refugees and the spread of Bolshevism as the newest onslaught of "Asiatic barbarism" threatening Germany and Western civilization as a whole.[21] One anthropologist predicted in 1934 that unless something was done to counter the "penetration of the Yellow race from the northeast and the Oriental race in the southeast," the Germans would soon deteriorate into "a partly Mongolized, partly Orientalized racial mix, which would then have to renounce forever all claims to a leading role in the cultural development of Europe."[22] In the frenzied political atmosphere of the interwar period, the Slavic Flood took on overtly racialized meanings.

This change coincided with a dramatic break from the main strategy of Prussian-German nationality policy as it had existed up to that point: Germanization. Ever since the partitions of the late-eighteenth century, commentators from across the political spectrum had assumed that the Poles would sooner or later renounce their native customs and merge into Germandom, though it was only after the founding of the Second Reich in 1871 that Germanization truly became a consistent enterprise of cultural repression.[23] In tackling the integration of their Polish subjects in this way, the Germans did not diverge significantly from the prevailing trend in other European nation-states, nearly all of which relied on a more or less coercive medium of structural violence to fuse minority groups into the dominant, and by implication superior, society.[24] As Norman Davies reminds us, "Cultural homogeneity was accepted as a

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[20] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 25-28; Geoff Eley, "German Politics and Polish Nationality: The Dialectic of Nation Forming in the East of Prussia," in *From Unification to Nazism*, ed. Geoff Eley (Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 200, 205-207; Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 16, 19, 81.

[21] Annemarie H. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914-1922* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 26, 96, 139.

[22] Theodor Mollison, "Rassenkunde und Rassenhygiene" in *Rassenhygiene im völkischen Staat. Tatsachen und Richtlinien*, ed. Ernst Rudin (Munich: Lehmann, 1934), 34-48.

[23] There are numerous classic works on German-Polish relations during the century and a half that preceded the First World War: Richard Wonser Tims, *Germanizing Prussian Poland: The H-K-T and the Struggle for the Eastern Marches in the German Empire, 1894-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941); Martin Broszat, *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik* (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1963); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Sozialdemokratie und Nationalstaat. Nationalitätenfragen in Deutschland, 1840-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971); Harry K. Rosenthal, *German and Pole: National Conflict and Modern Myth* (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1976); William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Richard Blanke, *Prussian Poland in the German Empire, 1871-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland, vol. II: 1795 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[24] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 121-122; Hanns Haas, "Ethnische Homogenisierung unter Zwang. Experimente im 20. Jahrhundert," in

legitimate necessity of modern civilization… So one cannot dismiss Germanization policy as something uniquely barbaric. It was broadly conversant with similar programs of social modernization all over Europe."[25] In Germany, however, the optimism propelling this assimilationist stance had begun to wane long before the First World War, in large part because government efforts to envelop them with German colonists had utterly failed to yield the expected dividends. One nationalist activist observed in 1898 that Polish migrant workers showed no interest whatsoever in discarding their language or becoming Germans. "Their entire behavior," he added, "gives the impression of a less intelligent race."[26] As Elizabeth Drummond has persuasively demonstrated, the loss of the eastern provinces in 1918-1919 pushed such sentiments from the margins to the mainstream: "The postwar period saw a gradual shift in this discourse, away from notions of culture, and by extension the possibility that the Poles could become more 'civilized,' toward essentialist notions of race and biologically-determined inferiority… Germanization, as a policy, was necessarily abandoned. Germanization, as an ideology, was also abandoned in favor of an exclusive and racialist approach to the national question."[27]

At the very least, it seemed obvious to many Germans in the 1920s and 1930s, looking back in hindsight, that attempts to acculturate and "improve" the Poles had backfired and actually served to strengthen Polish national consciousness – the catastrophic outcome of a futile and misguided venture that led to the forfeiture of the very lands it was supposed to protect. As products of the same historical milieu, the Nazis embraced forced population transfers as a remedy for the failed policies of their predecessors, an extreme yet not entirely novel measure for damming the Slavic Flood.[28] Dr. Otto Reche, a professor of anthropology at the University of Leipzig, made the connection emphatically clear in an influential policy proposal dated September 24, 1939: "The burden of ethnically alien and racially inferior inhabitants would inevitably cause a bastardization of German immigrants… Mixing between Germans and Slavs must be avoided at all costs; that can only be assured by removing the Poles… Every Pole who can supply an excuse for Polish irredentism and lust for conquest, which the experience of centuries has shown can only be overcome with great difficulty, must disappear from the German settlement space."[29]

Ausweisung, Abschiebung, Vertreibung in Europa, 16.-20. Jahrhundert, eds. Sylvia Hahn, Andrea Komlosy, and Ilse Reiter (Innsbruck: Studien, 2006), 141-143.

[25] Davies, *God's Playground*, 96.

[26] Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 77-78.

[27] Elizabeth A. Drummond, "From 'verloren gehen' to 'verloren bleiben': Changing German Discourse on Nation and Nationalism in Poznania," in *The Germans and the East*, eds. Charles Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2007), 227-229, 234-236.

[28] Not entirely novel because Bismarck had presided over the deportation of 32,000 Polish migrant laborers for national-demographic reasons, though this action was never repeated during the Imperial era; see Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 98-99.

[29] Reche, "Leitsätze zur bevölkerungspolitischen Sicherung des deutschen Ostens," September 24, 1939, in *Der "Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistische Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, eds. Mechthild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher, and Cordula Tollmien (Berlin: Akademie, 1993), 351-355.

The primary motive behind the deportation of Poles in the winter of 1939-1940, and much of the subsequent violence meted out against East European Slavs more generally, lay in the perception of being colonized by outsiders, in the fear of territorial displacement and racial dissolution at the hands of a foreign power.[30] But there was something else going on here as well. In its most familiar semblance, the Slavic Flood embodied a cultural threat as well as a specifically racial one – the imagery of water evoking the inherent volatility of ethnic boundaries and the inner disintegration that presages external attack.[31] It expressed a widely felt sense of terror toward what propagandists during the Imperial era referred to as *Überfremdung* – a word that translates as alienation, particularly from one's own native culture, yet also implies a type of foreign infiltration and often bears the xenophobic connotation of "being swamped by foreigners."[32] If the Slavs could merge into Germandom, as German nationalists insisted they could throughout the nineteenth century, then by extension the opposite had to hold true as well, and "the tendency of conversion was rendered much stronger in this direction."[33] For many Germans, as Kristin Kopp points out, the Poles "resisted location in a colonial self-other dichotomy, fluidly transgressing the border between self and other in a threatening slippage of similarity."[34] In popular novels like Gustav Freytag's oft-cited *Soll und Haben* (1855), they represented an exterior affront to the German way of life as well as an interior challenge to the German protagonist's identity, personifying "both that which he is not and that which he fears he might become."[35] While refuting the presumption that "racially inferior" Poles could ever be transformed into Germans, the Nazis upheld a preexisting belief that Germans could *become* Polish in terms of language, religion, and national affiliation. In other words, they inherited the myth of "lost German blood."

By 1939, this discursive paradigm had gained a profound emotive resonance within the collective psyche of the German people, its roots stretching deep into the past, its various branches and offshoots reflective of their tethering to diverse historical periods. For over one hundred years, debates concerning the parameters of citizenship in the German-speaking lands had centered on the concern that Germans who emigrated abroad (*Auslandsdeutsche*), or lived in borderland areas, were acutely susceptible to the lure of foreign cultures, prone to neglecting their ethnic heritage and "going native." As early as the

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[30] A. Dirk Moses, "Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 29. Moses does not make this argument specifically, though he does offer an intriguing interpretation of the Holocaust as a "subaltern genocide," given the perception that Jews were an alien force that had "colonized" Germany. Also see David Furber and Wendy Lower, "Colonialism and Genocide in Nazi-occupied Poland and Ukraine," on pages 372-402 of the same volume.

[31] Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, vol. I: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway, Erica Carter, and Chris Turner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 181-183, 230.

[32] Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 25.

[33] Kristin Kopp, "Constructing Racial Difference in Colonial Poland," in Ames, Klotz, and Wildenthal, *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, 79.

[34] Kristin Kopp, "Contesting Borders: German Colonial Discourse and the Polish Eastern Territories," (Ph.D. diss., University of California-Berkeley, 2001), 44.

[35] Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 199.

1830s, commentators had lamented what they saw as the inevitable "de-nationalization of our tribal brothers" in places as far afield as Hungary, Ohio, Venezuela, and Zanzibar.[36] Germans were not alone in this respect. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Western thinkers had leveraged societal fears of de-population at home into calls for the attainment of colonies overseas, not just as the key to stimulating greater demographic growth, but as a countermeasure to prevent co-national emigrants from assimilating into foreign polities overseas (European or otherwise).[37] Yet once Germany did inaugurate a formal policy of overseas colonial expansion in the 1880s, this mood of solemn resignation morphed into panic, as various organs of popular opinion demanded that the state maintain close ties with colonists and a surge of literature appeared with advice for them on how to remain German in exotic environments. By the turn of the century, the outlook of metropolitan observers had turned even more pessimistic, evidenced by the frequent use of the word *Verkafferung* (literally Niggerization) to decry intermingling with blacks in German Southwest Africa, as well as the widespread conjecture that Auslandsdeutsche all over the globe had been "corrupted by the pernicious cultural and racial influence of their locales and cut off from the true source of Germanness in the homeland."[38]

To reconcile the alterity of the Auslandsdeutsche with presumptions of innate racial superiority, German intellectuals came up with the quixotic notion that these émigrés acted as *Kulturdünger*, or cultural fertilizer, sacrificing their national identity to enrich the biological makeup of foreign peoples and providing "an organic resource for cultural cultivation in the service of others."[39] This concept of racial diffusionism was not all that peculiar at the time.[40] Even as anxieties about breeding with "lesser races," or miscegenation, spread across the Western world, they coexisted with the residue of pre-modern fantasies in which interracial procreation (what the French termed *métissage*) elevated the capabilities of indigenous non-whites while absorbing them into the European stock – a contention shared among figures as diverse as Spanish priests in the Andes, white legislators in the United States, German administrators in Africa, and British scientists in Australia.[41] Such reveries found unusually extensive purchase in

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[36] Bradley D. Naranch, "Inventing the Auslandsdeutsche: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71," in Ames, Klotz, and Wildenthal, *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, 27-28; Nancy R. Reagin, "German Brigadoon? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans' Perceptions of Auslandsdeutschen in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 248-249.

[37] Margaret Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 39.

[38] Krista O'Donnell, "Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship," in O'Donnell, Bridenthal, and Reagin, *The Heimat Abroad*, 44.

[39] Naranch, "Inventing the Auslandsdeutsche," 33-34.

[40] On the theory of European diffusionism, see J.M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: Guilford, 1993), 8-15.

[41] Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 202; Karen Vieira Powers, "The Battle for Bodies and Souls in the Colonial North Andes: Intraecclesiastical Struggles and the Politics of Migration," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 75, no. 1 (February 1995), 33-35, 39. Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3

Germany precisely because of the wide-ranging mobility of Germans within Europe, because the fear of expatriates joining their respective host societies overseas came to augur the nightmare of a German nation scattered, weak, and engulfed by foreigners in the mother country itself.[42]

In other words, the menace of "de-Germanization" in the colonial realm subtly fed a corresponding sense of dread concerning the survival of German-speaking minorities in Europe (and vice versa). Hence, a number of organizations sprang up after 1871 to defend diasporic communities left outside the borders of the Second Reich from the impact of Czechification, Magyarization, Russification, and so forth, though these activities concentrated most intently on Prussian Poland, where state officials depicted inter-ethnic relations as a struggle to assimilate and subsume one nation into the other and warned that "a Polonization is taking place in certain regions that had previously been won over to Germanic customs, culture, and language."[43] One of these interest groups, the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*), founded in 1891, prefigured the Nazis by (among other things) lobbying for the naturalization of Germans left outside the boundaries of the Kaiserreich and even calling for military expansion to "redeem" them.[44] It was in no small measure due to their inordinate influence that the decades leading up to the First World War saw a rash of legislation that removed the Polish language from the public sphere and restricted its usage in school instruction, civil administration, and legal proceedings – all in the name of suppressing Polishness as an alternative form of cultural identity.[45] The religious dimension of this undertaking is especially noteworthy. The campaign of anti-Catholic persecution known as the *Kulturkampf* (1871-1878) focused heavily on combating the growth of the Polish national movement by weakening ecclesiastical control over education in the eastern provinces, and even after it abated, local bureaucrats and Protestant associations accused Catholic priests of conspiring to convert evangelical frontier outposts.[46] Bismarck himself corroborated these charges in 1885 by magnifying "the political dangers and the threat to the state posed by a Polonization of a large segment of the Prussian population."[47] There was nothing abnormal about any of this either. Fierce competition for the "hearts and minds" of individual subjects constituted the very essence of nationality

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(June 2001): 885; George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 217-219.

[42] Naranch, "Inventing the Auslandsdeutsche," 33.

[43] Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 22. Also see Volker R. Bergahn, "Germans and Poles, 1871-1945," in Bullivant, Giles, and Pape, *Germany and Eastern Europe*, 15. The quote is from Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 11.

[44] Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886-1914* (Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 78. On further attempts to grant extra-territorial citizenship to the Auslandsdeutssche, see Howard Sargent, "Diasporic Citizens: Germans Abroad in the Framing of German Citizenship Laws," in O'Donnell, Bridenthal, and Reagin, *The Heimat Abroad*, 24-27.

[45] Eley, "German Politics and Polish Nationality," 207; Tims, *Germanizing Prussian Poland*, 133-136.

[46] Kevin Cramer, "The Politics of Piety: The Philanthropic Work of the Gustav Adolf Association in the German Diaspora, 1832-1945" (Paper presented at the 15th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, October 2010). Also see Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*, 87. On the *Kulturkampf*, see Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 128-129; Rosenthal, *German and Pole*, 27-28.

[47] Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 12-13.

politics in the polyglot borderlands of late nineteenth and early twentieth century East-Central Europe, especially in the frontier provinces of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[48]

Nevertheless, public interest in the fate of ethnic Germans before the First World War paled in comparison with the outpouring of support that came after it, when the preservation of German "language islands," as they were called, became nothing short of a national obsession.[49] Whether they lived in one of the successor states the Allies carved out from the defeated Hohenzollern and Habsburg empires or returned from relinquished colonial possessions in Africa and Asia, the Auslandsdeutsche were visible everywhere as "living symbols of the injustices meted out at Versailles and the suffering of the German nation as a whole."[50] The sheer volume of cultural production devoted to this topic is astonishing; one contemporary bibliography listing publications on German colonies in Yugoslavia contained over eight thousand titles.[51] It certainly did not help that nationalist regimes there and elsewhere employed a range of oppressive measures to accelerate the assimilation of German minorities, or that the architects of the Versailles settlement intended the disappearance of these exclaves as ethnically distinct polities. Treaties for their protection applied only for a transitional period; they were not a permanent guarantee of cultural autonomy (which is in part why German politicians had so little faith in the League of Nations to defend the interests of their "blood brothers" abroad).[52] In response to these developments, a new generation of outreach groups and think tanks leapt into action, each dedicated to safeguarding German culture "wherever it was threatened, whether in the borderlands or abroad." The Weimar Republic generously subsidized these institutions, though its impotence in the diplomatic arena and inability to assure the civil liberties of exiled compatriots only encouraged popular fixation with the plight of "lost Germans."[53]

It was in this climate that an organic, supranational understanding of Germanness came to the foreground.[54] The premise that Germans everywhere belonged to a mystical "cultural nation" had

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[48] On contemporaneous nationality conflicts in the Habsburg Dual Monarchy, see Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[49] For a good introduction to this topic, see Anthony Timaher Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980).,1-15.

[50] Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1993). The quote comes from Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 96.

[51] Reagin, "German Brigadoon," 253.

[52] See, for instance, Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19, 64-66; Haas, "Ethnische Homogenisierung," 143-144. On the relationship between these forms of cultural persecution and increasing identification with Nazism, see the collection of essays in Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth, eds., *Die Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Munich: IKGS, 2006).

[53] Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 25-27; Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit und Umsiedlungspolitik 1939-1945. Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Auslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006), 9-10. Also see the introduction in Mathias Beer, Deitrich Beyrau, and Cornelia Rauh-Kühne, eds., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung. Minderheitenpolitik zwischen 1914 und 1950* (Essen: Klartext, 2009).

[54] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 107-111. Brubaker refers to this phenomenon as "homeland nationalism." Stefan Manz has recently argued that many ethnic German communities saw themselves as part of a collective polity even before the First World War; see *Constructing a German Diaspora: The "Greater German Empire," 1871-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

certainly been around for a long time; a symptom of geopolitical fragmentation before 1871, it initially appeared alongside the Romantic origins of German nationalism in the early nineteenth century.[55] The "minority problem" of the interwar years, however, triggered a fundamental shift in how Germans thought about this relationship, a change apparent in the ethnocentric new meanings assigned to the word *Volk*, along with its cognate *Volkstum* and the adjectival form *völkisch*. While these terms continued to denote conventional cultural markers of national identity, they dropped previous juridical connotations and came to signify an extraterritorial version of the nation based on blood lineage and a singular tribal consciousness – sometimes, though by no means always, imbued with muscular racial and biological overtones.[56] The concept of the *Volk* as demos, which designated a political community of citizens with shared legal rights, was replaced by a concept of the *Volk* as ethnos, in which "an imagined community of descent, historical myths, and fantasies of collective blood and soil fused with one another."[57]

It is highly significant in this respect that he *first* point of the official party program of the NSDAP demanded the "unification of all Germans in one Greater Germany on the basis of the right of national self-determination."[58] In a revealing change of terminology, the National Socialists recast the Auslandsdeutsche as Volksdeutsche and extolled their "natural rights of the blood" as a justification for dismantling the international system.[59] The leading Nazi agronomist, Richard Walther Darré, articulated the crux of this aspiration as it pertained to Eastern Europe in simple and unequivocal terms: "The idea of blood and soil gives us the moral right to take back as much eastern land as is necessary to achieve harmony between the body of our people and geopolitical space."[60] Of course, the dream of a "Greater Germany" was hardly a Nazi invention, nor was Pan-Germanism the sole ideology if its kind. The former originated in the decades preceding the revolutions of 1848-1849; the latter had equivalents in a variety of nationalist traditions that were also routinely instrumentalized to call existing borders into question.[61] In addition to the well-known idea of an "Anglo-Saxon race," the English also advanced notions of a "Pan-

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[55] Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 114, 123-124; Dieter Langewiesche, "Wo der deutsche Osten lag," in Groβbongardt, Kluβmann, Pötzl, *Die Deutschen im Osten Europas*, 139-140.

[56] Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132; David Imhoof, *Becoming a Nazi Town: Culture and Politics in Göttingen between the Wars* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 68.

[57] This distinction between *ethnos* and *demos* was first theoretically elaborated by Michael Mann in *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3, 184. Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt use the same terminology; for the quote, see their "Einleitung" in *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, eds. Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009), 11.

[58] "Parteiprogramm der NSDAP vom 25.2.1920," in *Deutsche Parteiprogramme*, ed. Wilhelm Mommsen (Munich: Isar, 1960), 548.

[59] Birgit Kletzin, *Europa aus Rasse und Raum. Die nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung* (Münster: Lit, 2002), 79-82.

[60] Richard Darré, "Die Bauern und der Staat," in *Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation*, eds. Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 133.

[61] Brian E. Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 19-21, 139-141. On the various European pan-nationalist movements, see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 58-60.

Britannic race" sustained across the world by "imperial ties of blood and kinship," while both the French and the Italians were also wont to portray themselves as a community of "racial brethren." In fact, some French colonialists in North Africa believed they were the descendants of ancient Romans "returning" to provinces that rightfully belonged to them, so even the heightened emphasis on previous historical settlement as a motive for colonial expansion, though rare, was not altogether unique to the Germans.[62] Aside from these antecedents and parallels, however, the combination of a global scope, violently racist animus, and inflated assertion of indigeneity distinguished Nazi irredentism from its precursors and counterparts (the ambitions of Pan-Turkic extremists in the moribund Ottoman Empire probably offer the closest truly analogous frame of reference).[63]

Writing in 1941, at a moment when the Germans were unquestioned masters in Europe, the dissident political theorist Franz Neumann defined this ideological matrix as "racial imperialism," which he astutely discerned as the conceptual motor driving German aggression in the late 1930s. "The sovereignty of the race," Neumann explained, "is the ideological basis for the fifth column and for imperialism… National Socialism rejects the state as the subject of international law and substitutes the sovereign racial people… The alleged racial ties shall be stronger than juristic or political allegiance… Racial Germans throughout the world remain Germans, members of the folk group, subject to its law."[64] In Neumann's view, the way Hitler managed the controversy over ethnic German minorities on the international stage was far more than just a string of opportunistic ploys: "For a believer, racial theory justifies the 'liberation' of Germans from foreign sovereignty and the incorporation into Greater Germany of territories largely inhabited by Germans."[65]

Racial imperialism entailed not just the conquest of lands where people of "German blood" had settled, but the "reclamation" of "German blood" itself, not just the acquisition of *Lebensraum* (living space), but of *Menschenmaterial* (human resources), not just the Germanization of soil, but of people too. So it was that beginning in the autumn of 1939, in accordance with the arrangements that divided Eastern Europe between Hitler and Stalin, SS agents began extracting ethnic German communities from areas controlled by the Soviets (the Baltic countries, Galicia, Volhynia, Bessarabia, Bukovina) and colonizing them in the annexed territories of western Poland. In the span of just a few short years, they brought around 629,000 people *Heim ins Reich*, or home to the Reich, in an operation that corresponded directly

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[62] Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare, and the Decline of the British World, 1869-1967* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9-11. Also see Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 35-36; Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 35-49.

[63] On Pan-Turkism, or Pan-Turaniasm as it was sometimes called, see Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, 1914-1923* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 106-111.

[64] Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944* (Chicago, IL: Dee, 2009), 168-169 [originally published in 1944].

[65] Ibid., 130.

with the expulsion of "ethnic aliens," whose farms, homes, property, and jobs were handed over to incoming ethnic German "resettlers" (*Umsiedler*).[66] In the National Socialist vision of a colonial "New Order" in the East, ethnic Germans played the role of pioneers, the human building blocks for a wall of peasant strongholds that would finally halt the onrush of the Slavic Flood. Yet while the Nazis lauded these groups as paragons of Germanic virtue and racial vitality, they also judged them to be extremely vulnerable to "de-Germanization" – a highly ambivalent rendering that closely matched and grew out of older perceptions of Auslandsdeutsche.[67] It was this apprehension, far more than the bugaboo of racial mixing, that originally inspired the strict policy of apartheid that encompassed nearly every facet of daily life in the eastern provinces, where the authorities criminalized any and all signs of fraternization between Germans and Poles, shuttered or destroyed Polish museums, churches, and other cultural institutions, and re-christened towns, streets, and topographical features with conspicuously German-sounding names.[68]

An event on the scale of the *Heim ins Reich* initiative cannot be reduced to a solitary cause. The need to accommodate the security concerns of the Soviets, who were just as eager to get rid of ethnic Germans as the Nazis were to "repatriate" them, points to the salience of foreign policy considerations, as does the absence of a concrete pre-war blueprint for this contingency and the hasty, improvised nature of its implementation.[69] With that being said, it is difficult to underestimate the motive force of racial imperialism. According to one awe-struck NSDAP official, the arrival of ethnic German resettlers in occupied Poland heralded the consummation of an age-old historical path as well as the birth of a revolutionary new era all at once: "A millennial yearning is now being fulfilled… Just as we are expanding the old, unnatural borders of the Bismarckian Reich, and ancient German regions are returning to the motherland, so too are the Volksdeutsche returning… Today there will once more be room for all men of German blood in the Greater German Reich."[70] Such grandiose musings boosted the impulse to counteract what SS officers dubbed "the danger of an alien worldview" – and they were not just talking about communism.[71] Otto Reche spelled out why the Umsiedler could not be left where they were by summoning a well-known line of argumentation: "In drawing these sound elements to the motherland, we prevent the Auslandsdeutsche from submerging into foreignness in the short or long term, and therefore

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[66] Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit*, 227.

[67] Doris L. Bergen, "The 'Volksdeutschen' of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust: Constructed Ethnicity, Real Genocide," in Bullivant, Giles, and Pape, *Germany and Eastern Europe*, 73-74, 82.

[68] USHMMA 15.029/1/6/3-4: Greiser to Koppe, September 25, 1940. Also see Alan E. Steinweis, "German Cultural Imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Poland, 1938-1945," *The International History Review* 13, no. 3 (August 1991):467-469.

[69] Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumarbeit*, 21, 88-89, 225.

[70] Quoted from Helen Roche, "Herrschaft durch Schulung: The Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten im Osten and the Third Reich's Germanising Mission," in *Nationalsozialismus und Regionalbewusstsein im östlichen Europa. Ideologie, Machtausbau, Beharrung*, eds. Burkhard Olschowsky and Ingo Loose (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 13.

[71] Bundesarchiv Berlin (=BA) R 49/3073/15-21: RKF Stabshauptamt, "Konzepte über die Ansiedlung des Ostens," unsigned, undated.

prevent them from becoming cultural fertilizer for foreign nations and enemies of the German people."[72] Even if Hitler and Himmler regarded this withdrawal as a temporary expedient (and their long-range colonization plans strongly suggest that they did), the prospect of "losing" ethnic Germans to other nationalities made them more than willing (at least in the short-term) to negate the entire purpose of missionary activities on behalf of these communities over the previous seventy years – that is, to maintain their presence as bastions of Germandom in the East. The impact of popular opinion should not be discounted either. The enthusiastic public fanfare that greeted media coverage of the resettlements in the fall and winter of 1939 (especially the film *Heimkehr*) indicates a vocal measure of approval endorsing the "return" of the Umsiedler to the "safety" of their "blood homeland."[73] If only indirectly, interwar domestic preoccupations with the cultural integrity of ethnic Germans abroad supplied a cloak of legitimacy to forced population transfers, which in turn did much to realize a goal that had intoxicated patriots for more than a century: the consolidation of all Germans into a single territorial nation-state.

But the Nazis never intended for this crusade to apply only to individuals who identified themselves as Germans. If one believed that the descendants of Germanic émigrés had forsaken their cultural background and merged into "alien ethnic groups" – a supposition which was not entirely unfounded – then it was only natural to presume that many foreigners were actually German by blood, whether they knew it or not. *This* is what Himmler meant when he spoke with Hitler about assimilating "racially valuable" Poles in May 1940, and he had plenty of intellectual backing to validate such a course of action thanks to the interwar academic discourse known as *Ostforschung* (Eastern Research) – a multi-disciplinary assemblage of revanchist scholarship that sought to prove that Germans were the original masters of Eastern Europe.[74] The geographer Wilhelm Volz, for instance, argued in 1921 that the Poles of Upper Silesia were in fact Polish-speaking Germans, whose advent he dated all the way back to the great migrations that accompanied the collapse of the (Western) Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries.[75] In 1935, the historian Erich Maschke extended roughly the same assertion to nearly all the Slavic lands of the East: "The ruling class in these countries was of Nordic race, like the Polish priests who were demonstrably of Viking origin and in whom German blood became ever stronger through

[72] Reche, "Sicherung des deutschen Ostens," 352.

[73] Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan Van Pelt, *Auschwitz, 1270 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 1996), 147. For a sample of contemporary publications on this topic, see Kurt Lück, *Die Cholmer und Lubliner Deutchen kehren heim ins Vaterland* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1940); Hans Johst, *Ruf des Reiches – Echo des Volkes! Eine Ostfahrt* (Munich: Eher, 1942).

[74] Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Guntram Henrik Herb, *Under the Map of Germany: Nationalism and Propaganda, 1918-1945* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus. Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der "Volkstumskampf" im Osten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Eduard Mühle, "The European East on the Mental Map of German Ostforschung," in *Germany and the European East in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Eduard Mühle (New York: Berg, 2003), 122.

[75] Wilhelm Volz, *Die völkische Struktur Oberschlesiens* (Breslau: Marcus, 1921), 10.

numerous marriages with German princesses."[76] In a similar vein, the ethnographer Walter Kuhn concluded that interbreeding with Ukrainians in Galicia and Volhynia had precipitated a contraction of the local German imprint in the sixteenth century, though not without infusing these indigenes with superlative biological faculties.[77] Another historian, Kurt Lück, composed a further iteration of this historical narrative: "Certainly the very strong medieval Germandom in Poland has, for the most part, been lost in Poledom [*Polentum*] – most Poles in the region have no idea how much German blood is hidden in them; only their strong Nordic characteristics, along with the many German family names, supply the evidence for this."[78] What tied these interpretations together, beyond their obvious chauvinism, was the conviction that, in Volz's words, "It is not race which determines ethnicity… but rather the will and the national consciousness."[79]

We must be careful not to construe *Ostforschung* solely as a manifestation of German idiosyncrasies. Nationalist movements across Europe employed similar rhetorical devices even before the First World War to lay claim to supposedly deluded ethnic brethren in contested borderland areas.[80] Yet the Nazis went far beyond any of their contemporaries by wedding these fantasies to an utterly racist creation narrative that extrapolated the myth of "lost German blood" to points all over the globe. National Socialist ideology tapped into a deep reservoir of European thought concerning the origins of mankind, a literature in which scholars from numerous countries posited the existence of a prehistoric "Aryan" *Urvolk* from which the various nations of Eurasia sprouted.[81] According to one propaganda brochure disseminated in 1938, "At the beginning of the last Ice Age, around 5,000 B.C., there emerged an Indo-Germanic people of Nordic blood… which splintered into smaller and larger groups as it expanded. From these fragments went forth Germans, Romans, Greeks, Slavs, Persians, and Aryan Indians… This original racial unity… [has] remained for thousands of years as the cement holding the Western peoples together."[82] In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler similarly described "Aryan-Nordic blood" not just as "cultural fertilizer," but as the wellspring of civilization since ancient times. Invoking the so-called Norman Theory, he cited the Russian Empire as "a wonderful example of the state-forming ability of the German element in an inferior race," one of many "mighty empires [that] have been created in this way." "Lower nations led by Germanic organizers and overlords," he went on "have more than once grown to be mighty state formations and have endured as long as the racial nucleus of the creative state race maintained

[76] Quoted from Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards*, 127.
[77] Ibid., 127.
[78] Ibid., 111.
[79] Wilhelm Volz, *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden. Aufsätze zu der Frage des Ostens* (Breslau: Hirt, 1926), 5-6.
[80] Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism*, 50, 126, 134.
[81] Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 55; Léon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (New York: Basic, 1974).
[82] Quoted from John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 12.

itself."[83] Ironically, the Germans could not even take credit for developing this worldview; they more or less borrowed it from French nobles, who in the late eighteenth century had submitted that the Frankish conquest of post-Roman Gaul meant that they were the progeny of a "Teutonic race" – a "natural" justification for social dominance over the "Gallic" lower classes conspiring to overthrow them.[84] By the end of the following century, during the *fin-de-siècle*, German *and* French academics had spun this yarn into a contention that all of the European aristocracies contained "predominantly Nordic bloodlines," now under threat from increasing urbanization and resultant patterns of natural selection that favored the numerically superior Slavs (or "Asiatic round-heads," as one anthropologist referred to them).[85]

Though palpably spurious, one can easily see why people believed in such hypotheses, even if they did not stretch all the way back to the dawn of humanity. It is true that German barons had more or less governed the Baltics from the Middle Ages right down to 1917, that Germans had traditionally played a disproportionate role in the court, military, and bureaucracy of the Tsars, and that a number of historic Russian leaders were of German descent, from Catherine the Great (1729-1796) to Sergei Witte (1849-1915).[86] It is equally the case that Germans and Austrians had for centuries occupied the elite strata of politics, science, the arts, and the economy in regions all over Central Europe where they did not form a majority (which is why social mobility and assimilation into German *Kultur* went hand in hand).[87] The National Socialists had a longer and more twisted historical memory, one that reached back much deeper in time and gazed much farther afield than the old imperial domains of the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns. Had not the great "migration of the peoples" (*Völkerwanderung*) catapulted "Germanic tribes" to power throughout the Mediterranean basin of late antiquity? Had not German knights and holy men brought Christianity to the heathen lands of the Baltic littoral with fire and sword during the Northern Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? Had Germans not fanned out far and wide across the earth during Europe's long history of overseas colonial migration? These were the rhetorical questions Nazi propagandists posed to their audiences, and the answers that followed were almost always the same. "All over the European landmass and beyond," one NSDAP functionary wrote, "Nordic elements are responsible for the quality and the achievements of nations. The greater the share of Nordic blood a

[83] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 648-649, 654-655. The "Norman Theory" posits that a Scandinavian people founded the first Russian state, the Kievan Rus. A central paradigm of Russianist historiography, it has been a source of endless debate that divides scholars to this day. See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "The Norman Theory of the Origin of the Russian State," *The Russian Review* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1947): 96-110.

[84] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2004), 215-216 [originally published in 1951].

[85] Otto Ammon, *Die natürliche Auslese beim Menschen* (Jena: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1893), 252-255. Although the term is from Ammon, the French anthropologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge advanced similar notions around the same time; see Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 58-60.

[86] Erik Amburger, *Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 502-519. Also see Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zahrenreich. Zwei Jahrhunderte deutsche-russische Kulturgemeinschaft* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1986).

[87] Davies, *God's Playground*, 86-87.

people possesses, the more valuable they are; the smaller [the amount], the weaker their capacity for achievement."[88]

Himmler's thinking on the matter was almost identical. He declared in 1935 that "good blood is ultimately the only thing that matters in the world… according to our reading of history, [it] is the leading creative element in every state."[89] Like Hitler, he characteristically attached this "reading of history" to the lands of Eastern Europe first and foremost. In October 1939, he told a group of civil servants in Poznań, "As early as 3,000 years ago and during the following period Teutons lived in the eastern provinces in which we now find ourselves. These ancient German settlements have more or less survived racially to the present day in closed communities and as islands, even if in some cases they no longer speak the language."[90] The Reichsführer-SS amplified this interpretation in paternalistic tones during an address to Nazi Party bosses in February 1940: "Originally what probably happened was that we had a Germanic-Nordic ruling class who – and this is reported even by academic historians – had assumed the position of lords or princes over some peoples in the East, in part at their request. They probably said, 'Send us somebody for we cannot control ourselves and we want somebody to keep us in order.'"[91] Only a gradual synthesis with the German aristocracy had enabled these "tribes" to evolve into nations; without an admixture of the "Nordic race," Himmler avowed, there could be no thought of Slavic culture or political leadership.[92]

Rather than conceiving of miscegenation as an inherently corrosive scourge, in other words, the leading intellectuals and politicians of the Third Reich in fact supposed that even the smallest doses of "German blood" had the power to endow "lesser races" with the biological rudiments of modernity while simultaneously enriching the German *Volk* itself. "In any attempted Germanization," declared Hitler, "one may not act on the basis of abstract collective concepts, but must instead ask in each individual case whether the person to be Germanized belongs to a race which would enhance our own people."[93] This perception fit hand in glove with one of the principal tenets of contemporary German anthropology: the thesis that all European nations, including the Germans, actually comprised an aggregate of "primal races," or *Urrassen*: Nordic, Dinaric, Falian, Eastern, East-Baltic, and Western, in addition to various non-European "race-types".[94] Of course, unless designating individuals who were "congenitally ill" or

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[88] Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in Czesław Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan* (Munich: Saur, 1994), Doc. 16.

[89] LOC/NMT, 623-624.

[90] Quoted from Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 443.

[91] Ibid., 264. Here Himmler lifted a scene almost verbatim from the *Primary Chronicle*, a foundational text for the early medieval history of the Eastern Slavs; see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky and Mark D. Steinberg, *A History of Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23-29.

[92] Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 99-100.

[93] Quoted from Henry Picker, ed., *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1976), 286-288.

[94] Christopher Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial Anthropology, and Genetics in the Dialectic of the Volk* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 23, 70-71, 133-134.

"racial aliens" (*Fremdrässige*) – Jews, "Gypsies" (Roma and Sinti), and non-whites – the NSDAP deemed it politically imprudent to advertise the "fact" of German racial heterogeneity, for such an admission would contradict the stated ideal of a united national community. The keyword within the administrative and propaganda lexicon of the Third Reich was not race, which most officials avoided using whenever possible, but *Volk*.[95] Nevertheless, most Nazis took it for granted that their own people no longer cohered as a "uniform racial nucleus" (something Hitler had also stressed in *Mein Kampf*). As one mid-level bureaucrat put it, "Our German *Volk* represents a mixture of various races, of which the Nordic race is the most strongly represented… But that in no way obviates a consideration of the presence of other racial elements – people who we reject purely on the basis of our race instinct and would prefer not to see in our body politic at all."[96] Crucially, for all the pessimism that came with it, this doctrine also implied that the "racial composition" of the Germans overlapped to a large degree with that of non-Germans. According to Hans F.K. Günther, perhaps the most influential German race theorist of the interwar years, it was totally invalid to conflate ethnic and linguistic boundaries with the geographical location of contemporary racial groups. "What is different from nation to nation," he insisted, "is not the race as such, but the proportion in which the races are mixed." Looking back on the course of human history, Günther postulated that all of the most outstanding figures of the Western tradition were progenies of the "Nordic race," regardless of their given cultural or political orientation.[97] Just as patriotic Germans could turn out to be "racial aliens," so non-Germans could turn out to be "of good blood."

This dialectic between race and *Volk* directly informed the language of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. Having discarded the terms "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" as purely linguistic descriptors and rejected the idea of a "German race" as "unscientific," jurists at the Reich Interior Ministry (*Reichsministerium des Innern*, RMdI) classified German citizens as "subjects of German or kindred blood who demonstrate by their conduct that they are willing and able to serve the German *Volk* and Reich in fidelity."[98] The phrase "German or kindred blood" conveyed the precept that most Germans shared a roughly similar "racial configuration" and possessed a higher quotient of "unmixed Nordic stock" than other Europeans,

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[95] Diemut Majer, *Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), 39-41.

[96] BA NS 2/60/20-48: Benz, "6 Jahre Auslese bei der Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums," undated.

[97] Günther's ideas were clearly indebted to the work of Arthur Comte de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, two of the foremost theorists of modern race thinking; see Hans F.K. Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (Munich: Lehmann, 1929), 9-13, 21-25, 59. The ideas mentioned above can also be found in Hans F.K. Günther, *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. by G.C. Wheeler (New York: Dutton, 1927). What Günther lacked in originality or actual academic credentials he more than made up for by synthesizing and popularizing earlier fantasies of Nordic supremacy, a talent which earned him prestigious professorships at the universities of Jena, Freiburg, and Berlin. Generous acclaim in right-wing circles also brought him to the attention of Nazi leaders like Himmler, Party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, and Hitler himself. In the 1930s, the Interior Ministry had also paid him as a consultant on racial matters. For secondary literature on Günther's ideology, influences, and reception, see Peter Schwandt, *Hans F.K. Günther. Porträt, Entwicklung und Wirken des rassistisch-nordischen Denkens* (Saarbrücken: VDM, 2008).

[98] Wilhelm Stuckart and Hans Globke, *Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935* (Munich: Beck, 1936), xii, 287. The term "non-Aryan" generally referred only to Jews and "Gypsies." Attempts to spread the idea of

whereas the second clause emphasized civic virtues and traditional aspects of national identity: a common history, language, and culture that formed the bedrock of political loyalty to the state and the broader ethnic collective.[99] However, while the Nazis broke sharply with previous juridical formulations by stigmatizing and disenfranchising "racial aliens" (Jews above all) as well as making citizenship contingent on a vague benchmark of "ethnic fealty" (as opposed to obeying the law, paying taxes, and rendering military service), they also diverged from earlier statutes by allowing for the integration of non-Germans on the grounds that they often contained the same "racial elements" found to one extent or another within the German gene pool.

Although there is a strong tendency to construe the *jus sanguinis* principle of the German citizenship law of 1913 as a precursor to Nazi racial legislation, "right of blood" in that context referred only to patrilineal descent from a German national (hence Hitler's scathing criticism, only slightly exaggerated, that a "Mongolian Wenceslaus" or "Zulu Kaffir" could become a German through "a simple dab of the pen").[100] In elevating race to a position of supreme importance in 1935, the Interior Ministry dropped this provision altogether while watering down *völkisch* criteria like language to such a degree that they in fact came to represent more of a final requirement for naturalization than a mandatory baseline. The main architect of the Nuremberg Laws, State Secretary Wilhelm Stuckart, explained in an official commentary that "member[s] of any minority group can demonstrate their willingness and ability to serve the German Reich… Reich citizenship, therefore, is open to racially kindred groups living in Germany, such as Poles, Danes, and others. It is an altogether different matter with subjects of alien blood."[101] Taking Günther's racial diffusionism as a starting point, Stuckart and his colleagues at the Interior Ministry began to posit in the mid-1930s that virtually any European could belong to the "Nordic race" by virtue of descent from Germanic migrants.[102] With the exception of people designated as "racial aliens", the Nazis did not a priori exclude non-German populations from the circle of potential "ethnic comrades," even if these groups did not identify themselves as Germans. Yet despite their best efforts, Stuckart and his associates never consistently specified what the concepts "kindred" and "non-kindred blood" actually meant in practice, defined what kind of behavior confirmed "fidelity to the German state

[99] Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 369-370, 403. Also see Cornelia Essner, *Die 'Nürnberger Gesetze', oder, Die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002).

[100] Sargent, "Diasporic Citizens," 29-30; Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen*, 369. The quote comes from Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 439.

[101] Wilhelm Stuckart and Hans Globke, *Kommentare zur deutschen Rassengesetzgebung* (Munich: Beck, 1936), 20-26, 28-30. It is worth noting that ethnic minorities like the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, the considerable number of native-born Poles in the Ruhr region, and the Slavic-speaking Lusatian Sorbs did retain their civil rights as German citizens, though the latter two groups were subject to increasing cultural persecution beginning in the late 1930s; see Helmut Schaller, *Der Nationalsozialismus und die slawische Welt* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2002), 142, 146-147, 178.

[102] Uwe Mai, *"Rasse und Raum". Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 55.

and *Volk*," or figured out a way to square the one with the other.[103] This failure to codify the nature of Germanness – a product of intramural disagreements as much as impracticability – set the stage for a series of bitter internal disputes during the opening months of the Second World War.

From the very earliest days of the occupation, Nazi functionaries stationed in Poland seemed to find pockets of "lost German blood" everywhere they went. Pondering over genealogical surveys on a cluster of villages in Upper Silesia, the regional SS deputy, Dr. Fritz Arlt, rejoiced upon discovering that "administrative separation from the Reich and the German cultural community, the immigration of a fertile Slav population, and a conscious and systematic program of Polonization have failed to destroy our knowledge of this old German settlement area."[104] These kinds of observations were thick on the ground in the other incorporated eastern territories too. A team of RMdI investigators dispatched to the Warthegau repeatedly stumbled across locals whose alleged medieval Germanic ancestors had been "submerged in *Polentum*" by the Catholic Church during the early modern period. "Today German racial characteristics can still be traced in the countryside," they concluded, "In the most varied places, [we] noticed the presence of blond persons belonging primarily to the Nordic race."[105] One female Nazi activist told a similar story of Polish-speaking villagers whose forebears had come to Galicia from Holland three to four centuries prior, yet "in the course of the years had forgotten their native tongue because of Russian and Polish oppression." Because they had "kept their blood lines pure," she saw it as her primary duty "to teach these people the German language, and gradually introduce them to German culture," even if "they hold fast to their own customs and traditions."[106] Herein lay the kernel of Nazi Germanization policy.

The most detailed and formative exegesis on the myth of "lost German blood" came from two Nazi Party racial theorists, Dr. Erhard Wetzel and Dr. Gerhard Hecht. In a widely circulated memorandum dated November 25, 1939, these two men reiterated the contention that Germans had inhabited western Poland "thousands of years before the seeping in of Slavic tribes," which purportedly owed their nation- and statehood to a "persistent stream of German blood" that had flowed eastward ever since. While acknowledging that it was "urgently necessary" to remove "ethnic aliens" from the area as soon as possible, the authors also surmised that the Polish national elite betrayed a "not insignificant portion of German blood." From this perspective, the most valuable "Germans" in the East were simultaneously the most dangerous, anti-German "renegades" (*Renegaten*): "For ethnic-political reasons, the racially superlative segments of the Polish people will put up fanatical resistance to Germanization… As is well-known, since the time of the Polish kingdom the Polish nation has been sustained ideologically

[103] Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide*, 109.
[104] Dwork and Van Pelt, *Auschwitz*, 188.
[105] Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards*, 159.
[106] Nancy R. Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 203.

and politically by its Church-supported Greater Polish national ideal. The predominantly Nordic elements, which are racially the same as us, are the bearers of this Greater Polish confessional idea." According to Wetzel and Hecht, "extracting and Germanizing" these "racially Nordic" individuals – by bringing them to the Reich if necessary – constituted the *first* requirement for a "ruthless decimation of the Poles" and the flourishing of "a racially unified German population in the new imperial territories."[107]

The staff of legal experts working under Wilhelm Stuckart at the RMdI advocated a highly similar approach. They had already released a preliminary decree on October 8, 1939, signed by Hitler, which granted immediate citizenship to all resident ethnic Germans in the incorporated eastern territories while also announcing the possibility of future naturalization for people of "German or kindred blood." [108] Stuckart and his boss, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, reasoned that local Volksdeutsche could easily be identified on the basis of ancestry, language, culture, schooling, and membership in German organizations.[109] Yet they refused to concede that Poles formed the majority of the remaining population, most of which they labeled a *Zwischenschicht*, or "intermediary stratum" – an amalgam of smaller Slavic-speaking ethnic groups (Kashubes, Masurians, Slonsaks, Gorals), allegedly "of related lineage" and thus eligible for integration into the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.[110] At every turn, Stuckart highlighted the radically inclusive possibilities afforded by Nazi racial legislation, advising that "ethnic aliens" with a "submerged German blood-share" should at least receive provisional civil rights; to deport such people, in his view, would be tantamount to relinquishing them for the Poles to benefit from.[111] "It should not be underestimated," he wrote on one occasion, "how many Poles, but also other foreigners, who would never have become Germans according to the logic of earlier citizenship laws, can now be made into Germans."[112] In a letter to propaganda minister Josef Goebbels, he again recommended a "generous" framework so as to ensure "the largest possible amount of Germanization."[113] A subsequent RMdI memorandum drove the point home even further: "members of foreign peoples who represent a desirable population increase," it said, should be recognized as German nationals "without regard to their

[107] BA R 186/35: Wetzel and Hecht, "Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebiete nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte," November 25, 1939.

[108] Hitler, "Führererlass über Gliederung und Verwaltung der Ostgebiete," October 8, 1939, in *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. V*: *Hitlerowskie "prawo" okupacyjne w Polsce*, ed. Karol Marian Pospieszalski (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1952), 35.

[109] BA R 70/210/9-12: Frick, "Erlass über den Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," November 25, 1939. The language of this decree and the arguments of other related RMdI ordinances in 1939 and 1940 drew heavily on the regulations for citizenship issued for the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (the Czech part of Czechoslovakia); see Hans Pfundtner, "Erlass des Reichsministers betr. Volkszugehörigkeit in das Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," March 29, 1939, *Reichsministerialblatt* IV (1939), 783.

[110] BA R 1501/5401/141: Frick to Obersten Reichsbehörden, November 29, 1939.

[111] BA R 1501/5378/109-113: Stuckart to Sommer, Wetz, Himmler, Lorenz, and Greifelt, November 13, 1939. Also see Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen*, 407.

[112] Wilhelm Stuckart, "Die Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Gebieten," *Zeitschrift der Akademie für Deutsches Recht* 8, no. 15 (1941): 233-237.

[113] BA R 2/1172: Stuckart to Goebbels, January 4, 1940.

ethnicity."[114] In late 1939 and early 1940, operating under the parameters of the Nuremberg Laws, the Interior Ministry was building a case for the "recovery" of "lost German blood" in western Poland.

This proposition dovetailed neatly with the megalomaniacal designs of Reichsführer-SS Himmler. As early as 1938, he had revealed his desire "to summon, to rob, and to steal all Germanic blood in the entire world wherever I can," predicting that "all Germanic blood that is not on the German side, can once again be our spoils." Like many other Nazis, Himmler regarded the presence of "Nordic blood in the veins of enemy nations" as the greatest threat confronting the Third Reich: "Throughout history and across the earth, the only thing that can ever be dangerous to us is our own blood." This hypothesis made "reclamation" all the more pressing for military and security reasons in addition to demographic ones: "Each Teuton whom we summon to Germany and make into a consciously German fighter is one less for the other side."[115] To uncover "bearers of lost German blood," as well as to keep out "biologically inferior elements," Himmler demanded that race supersede ethnicity when it came to questions of citizenship and criticized the Interior Ministry for its supposed dependence on an outmoded way of thinking. "The first characteristic of German nationality," he stipulated in a letter of protest dated January 13, 1940, "must be the positive determination of racial belonging," not "purely superficial indications of German ethnicity (language, education, culture, etc.)."[116] To this effect, Himmler suggested assigning control over naturalization to his SS Race and Settlement Main Office (*Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*, RuSHA) and harked back to the notorious shortcomings of Prussian-German nationality policy in the eastern borderlands to strengthen his claim:

> The people certainly cannot be Germanized by the Party taking charge of them and educating them politically, because such a pursuit has been followed by the German administration and the German military for more than one hundred years, with the result that people were Germans during the time of German rule and Poles during the time of Polish rule. These old methods have historically proven to be incorrect. A Germanization of the eastern provinces can only succeed through sifting the population in accordance with racial knowledge.[117]

For all their forcefulness, however, Himmler's objections were relatively tame compared to the resistance Stuckart's proposals stirred among Nazi Party bosses (*Gauleiter*) in western Poland. Though technically subordinate to the RMdI as provincial chiefs of the civil administration, Hitler ensured that these viceroys enjoyed considerable independence due to their standing as regional heads of the NSDAP and could therefore reject attempts by the Interior Ministry to interfere in their domains. Although Frick and Stuckart assumed that only representatives of the state bureaucracy would adjudicate legal status and distribute nationality papers, the Gauleiter did their best to allocate these tasks to trusted Party comrades

[114] BA R 49/61/8-41: RMdI, "Entwurf betr. Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," unsigned, July 3, 1940.

[115] Agnes F. Peterson and Bradley F. Smith, eds., *Heinrich Himmler. Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen* (Munich: Propyläen, 1974), 127. Also see Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, 291.

[116] BA R 49/61/47: Walter, "Vermerk betr. Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," May 20, 1940.

[117] BA NS 2/61/30-31: Himmler to Bormann, May 20, 1940.

(the two were often one and the same). Not surprisingly, the registration of local ethnic Germans in the fall of 1939 suffered from endemic conflict over competencies, protocol, and chain of command, not to mention recriminations bandied about on all sides.

The most vocal outrage by far arose in the Warthegau, where Gauleiter Greiser accused RMdI officials in Berlin of completely disregarding the principles of "ethnic struggle" (*Volkstumskampf*). Along with his nationality adviser, Dr. Karl Coulon, Greiser maintained that the vast majority of his subjects were Poles, plain and simple, and wanted them removed as soon as possible. The imperative to "cleanse" the eastern provinces of all "undesirables" meant that any blanket award of citizenship was unacceptable. In Greiser's Warthegau, a uniquely rigorous system of classification emerged in late October 1939 – the German Ethnic Registry (*Deutsche Volksliste*, DVL) – in which the Secret State Police (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, Gestapo) and SS Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, SD) occupied the central role.[118] The resident SD expert on ethnic-political issues, Herbert Strickner, devised the screening guidelines for the DVL in conjunction with Coulon, and in their eyes confirmation of "racially pure" German descent, though essential, did not guarantee acceptance. They sought to keep out not just "ethnic and racial aliens," but any German considered "politically unreliable" on account of suspected anti-Nazi leanings or sympathy for the Poles. They also tended to look askance at ethnic Germans who had failed to distinguish themselves as "ethnic fighters" during the interwar years, and took to rebuffing those not enrolled in local German organizations even when "no other anti-German activity has been verified."[119] In keeping with this propensity, the DVL divided local Volksdeutsche into "avowed Germans" (Group A) who had "proven" their commitment to Germandom under Polish rule, and "ancestral Germans" (Group B) who had preserved their German customs yet "remained indifferent" to the "ethnic struggle."[120]

The contingent of SS security and police officials in Poznań, like Greiser and Coulon, put a premium on *völkisch* standards of identity and looked upon "Polonized Germans" as turncoats. Hence, they advised against Himmler's scheme for a naturalization procedure based on race, and one directive from late January 1940 in particular effectively summarizes their reasoning:

> To be sure, certain racial characteristics are usually evidence of Germans among the ancestors of the applicant. However, racial characteristics as they exist in the Reich cannot be utilized as a secure evaluation principle for German ethnicity. On the contrary, the observation is regularly

[118] Before the war, the Gestapo made up one section of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*, SiPo), which was folded into the Sicherheitsdienst in 1939. Although the latter department was technically referred to as the SiPo-SD in official correspondence, I will simply refer to it as the SD, since the SiPo actually ceased to exist as a formal agency in September 1939. The Gestapo remained a separate entity and sister organization of the SD, though in practice their membership overlapped.

[119] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/6-7: Müller to Rapp, December 29, 1939.

[120] Strickner, "Die 'Deutsche Volksliste' in Posen. Bericht über die Entstehung und die Entwicklung des Verfahrens," undated, in *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. IV: Niemiecka lista narodowa w "Kraju Warty,"* ed. Karol Marian Pospieszalski (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1949), 20-130. Also see Robert L. Koehl, "The Deutsche Volksliste in Poland, 1939-1945," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 15 (1956): 354-366; Birthe Kundrus, "Regime der Differenz. Volkstumspolitische Inklusionen und Exklusionen im Warthegau und im Generalgouvernement 1939-1944," in Bajohr and Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft*, 114.

> being made that the politically active Nordic element among the Poles in the vicinity of Posen [Poznań] is especially strong. These politically active people are the least likely to take an unclear position in the ethnic struggle. One cannot indulge in the hope of recovering these Nordic Poles by pandering to them.[121]

From this point of view, attempting to reclaim "bearers of lost German blood" was not only futile, but extremely hazardous, for it threatened the domestic stability of the fatherland and the (imagined) cultural homogeneity of the German people. Though not as vociferously, Stuckart and his associates likewise cautioned that "unless it concerns an alien blood-share… a racial evaluation on its own in no way represents a suitable frame of reference for the classification of German and foreign nationals."[122]

Many scholars have followed the lead of Martin Broszat in attributing these debates to a clash between pragmatic "traditionalists" in the Interior Ministry who favored a return to earlier nationality policies and ideological "hard-liners" in the SS and the Nazi Party who preferred an exclusivist, racial-biological format for awarding German citizenship.[123] There are several reasons to question this interpretation. Stuckart and his staff had no intention of assimilating "racial aliens" and furthermore expected that anyone eligible for naturalization "on the basis of their alleged affiliation to the German *Volk*" would still have to be "examined as to whether they represent a desirable population increase [*erwünschten Bevölkerungszuwachs*]."[124] All of this was a far cry from the bureaucratic practices of the Kaiserreich and the pre-unification Prussian monarchy.[125] On the other hand, RMdI personnel definitely did not ignore ethnic politics either, as Greiser and the SD circle in Poznań alleged. Stuckart proclaimed in a draft ordinance dated November 13, 1939 that foreigners of "German or kindred blood" could not become full citizens until after they had adopted the German language and verified their fealty to the Nazi regime. Those who stubbornly clung to their Polish national identity, to say nothing of those who posed an immediate danger to political security, would still be earmarked for expulsion.[126]

The overblown complaints Himmler and Greiser lodged about the "statist formulas" of the Interior Ministry should rightly be seen as calculated attacks in a battle over political authority. Each of the major players knew very well that whoever commanded the machinery of ethno-racial classification in occupied Poland would accrue immense power to their standard, and each of them were convinced that their actions conformed with National Socialist ideology as well as functional expediency. But the dispute

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[121] Gerhard Wolf, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität. Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012), 273.

[122] BA R 49/61/8-41: RMdI, "Entwurf betr. Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," unsigned, July 3, 1940.

[123] Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik, 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961).

[124] BA R 70/210/9-12: Frick, "Erlass über den Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," November 25, 1939; Pfundtner, "Erlass des Reichsministers betr. Volkszugehörigkeit," 783.

[125] Ingo Haar, "German Ostforschung and Anti-Semitism," in *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1920-1945*, eds. Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 11, 15. Haar also points out that Broszat addressed neither the influence of Hans F.K. Günther nor the ideas of *Ostforschung*.

[126] BA R 1501/5378/109-113: Stuckart to Sommer, Wetz, Himmler, Lorenz, and Greifelt, November 13, 1939.

does illustrate an overarching tension between the categories of race and *Volk*, with Himmler exalting the former, Greiser stressing the latter, and Stuckart trying to account for both. To a large extent, this inconsistency reflected differing benchmarks of "fidelity to Germandom." Himmler's position was by the far the most radical; strange though it may sound, he blithely disregarded "political reliability" as a precondition for membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft*. While Stuckart and Frick at least agreed with officials in the Warthegau that "anti-German renegades" were beyond the pale – insofar as such individuals had actively served the Polish cause – they did not feel the same way about Volksdeutsche who had engaged in strictly party-political opposition to Nazism, belonged to Polish associations (in many cases to protect their livelihood), or merely declined to participate in local ethnic German political life. "Active support for Germandom," one of their memoranda stressed, "is not a prerequisite for recognition as a German national. Even an indifferent or a poor German remains a German, and we must avoid displacing him against his will into the non-German camp and thereby feeding it Germanic blood… Ethnicity and political reliability are not the same thing."[127]

At the same time, the Interior Ministry went further and asserted that Poles and other Slavic minorities from the *Zwischenschicht* might still carry "Nordic stock" even if they had no certifiable proof of German ancestry: "Full or predominantly German descent is not a prerequisite for German nationality… someone who stems partially or even fully from another tribe can also be considered a German national. On the other hand, it is possible in individual cases that someone who is of partial or total German descent must be regarded as a member of a foreign *Volk*." Once again, ethnicity appears within the Nazi imaginary as an elective and malleable phenomenon, as something superimposed on top of race yet not reducible to it. While "persons of full alien blood (Jews, Gypsies, members of non-European races)" could "never be regarded as German nationals," "ethnic aliens" with non-German parents or grandparents could still qualify for naturalization if they were "counted among the races from which the German *Volk* is composed in its overwhelming majority."[128] If "racial aliens" were capable of donning the external trappings of German culture, then theoretically a foreign people could have also absorbed "racially superior elements" into its own "ethnic substance" at some point in the past. In pursuit of demographic rejuvenation, and to deny the enemy this "vital biological resource," the Interior Ministry held fast to its original standpoint, first intimated by Stuckart in October 1939: that "members of foreign peoples who represent a desirable population increase [should] become German subjects, and thereby receive the opportunity for a full Germanization. If this takes place, then they will also be able to attain

[127] BA R 49/61/8-41: RMdI, "Entwurf betr. Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," unsigned, July 3, 1940.

[128] BA R 70/184/51-54: Meyer to Landräte and Polizeipräsidenten in Danzig-West Prussia, June 3, 1940. Also see Pfundtner, "Erlass des Reichsministers betr. Volkszugehörigkeit," 783.

the right of Reich citizenship."[129] The RMdI model bore an obvious resemblance to Himmler's plan for the consolidation of "Germanic blood" from all over the world, which is why it also patently contradicted the strict ethnocentric methodology touted by Greiser and his retinue of SD and Nazi Party consultants in the Warthegau. Equally as important, while their divergent opinions exposed a disconnect between racial imperialism and ethnic-political security, none of these figures contested the fundamental assumption that the incorporated eastern territories were awash in "lost German blood"; they merely disagreed over what to do with it – at least at first.

The byzantine complexity of ethnographic conditions on the ground ultimately compelled the Nazis to decide on a racial taxonomy of the indigenous population. One commentator pointed out that "the great diversity of the population" made a straightforward policy of segregation untenable, since "a distinction between 'German' and 'Polish' according to the principle of affiliation alone would not do justice to the facts."[130] In a land with such a long history of ethnic mixing, "Germans" and "Poles" could hardly be said to represent stable, homogeneous collectivities; the same was true of the various Slavophone groups of the *Zwischenschicht*, the Ukrainian minority, and those inhabitants who identified with multiple nationalities or eschewed such nomenclature altogether. The incorporated eastern territories, in other words, were a ferment of what many scholars have recently begun to refer to as national indifference: a collection of behaviors which implicitly ignore, reject, or manipulate national allegiances in favor of local, regional, and religious ones and often take the form of cultural plurality, intermarriage, bilingualism, and opportunistic side-switching between rival nationalisms.[131] The reality of national indifference had been a constant thorn in the side of German and Prussian administrators for more than a century, and while its hybrid forms facilitated the Nazis' goal of breaking down Slavic ethnic groups into smaller components, they also undermined ideals of German exceptionalism.

The deportations of late 1939 and early 1940 brought these contradictions into sharp relief. As Wehrmacht units and SS death squads spread a wave of seemingly random violence across the Polish countryside, it was only natural that many people tried to protect themselves by applying for German citizenship. Government agencies were thus overwhelmed with supplicants of all kinds who claimed to have a long-lost German uncle or grandmother.[132] Forced to rely primarily on verbal affirmations and the biased input of "avowed" local Volksdeutsche, officials often had no dependable means of corroborating

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[129] BA R 49/61/8-41: RMdI, "Entwurf betr. Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," unsigned, July 3, 1940.

[130] H.H. Schubert, "Volkspolitische Voraussetzungen der Deutschen Volksliste," *Neues Bauerntum* 33 (1941): 404-405.

[131] For an introduction to the topic of "national indifference," see Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 93-119.

[132] Gerhard Wolf, "Suitable Germans: Enforced Assimilation Policies in Danzig-West Prussia, 1939-1945," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism*, eds. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 217.

the parentage of their constituents, even when they did have access to written documentation such as birth, marriage, and death certificates, military credentials, school and church records, receipts from German stores or German-language newspapers, membership cards for German organizations, and so forth.[133] Otto Ohlendorf, a high-ranking SD functionary, deliberated on several aspects of this predicament in January 1940: "The determination of who in our prison camps is an ethnic German and who is a Pole produces significant difficulties," in part because many Volksdeutsche spoke Polish, though also because many Poles had "fraudulently obtained nationality certificates through devious means and in so doing created a general sense of mistrust among the authorities, which now disadvantages the actual ethnic Germans."[134] Indeed, of all the problems that hindered the deportations – transport bottlenecks, economic and infrastructural disruptions, lack of coordination – the responsible SD commander, Albert Rapp, underlined insufficient attention to the ancestry of expellees as the most serious, having recently learned that the Gestapo had mistakenly uprooted scores of ethnic Germans from their homes.[135]

Interestingly, Rapp only knew about these "accidental" evictions because many German citizens in the Reich had petitioned the state on behalf of family members who somehow ended up in the General Government. In late December 1939, Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller said his office was receiving twenty cases per day "in which Reich Germans make inquiries about relatives in Poland who have been deported and dispossessed." This "intolerable" situation gave him "the impression that German descent is not always conclusively ascertained during the implementation of resettlement."[136] One lawyer in Berlin named Martin Gellert, for instance, sent a letter to the district administrator (*Landrat*) of Ostrowo begging him not to evict his father, an "ethnic comrade" who was Protestant, spoke German, had been "brought up as a German man," and had always shown "reverence for the German nation." Gellert closed his appeal by reminding the Landrat, "We are pure Aryans; our proof of ancestry (*Ahnennachweis*) dating back to 1800 has been recognized by the NSDAP."[137] Ethnic Germans in Poland filed similar grievances. In September 1939, Anton Wolf, a resident of Zduńska Wola, wrote to the commandant of an internment camp in nearby Łódź to plead for the release of his daughter and her family: "My forefathers migrated here 125 years ago from the Bohemian forests of the Sudetenland," he recalled, "yet they never forgot or betrayed their old German homeland. They passed on their fidelity to Germandom to their children and grandchildren, as well as the German spirit for work, diligence, honesty, and perseverance."[138] These letters offer a remarkable portrait of the historical consciousness embedded in popular markers of ethnic and racial belonging, not to mention how the one intersected with the other. While both men highlighted

[133] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/124: Schimmel to Landräte and Oberbürgermeister in Bromberg, June 27, 1942.
[134] BA R 58/147/69-70: Ohlendorf, "Meldung über das Renegatproblem im ehemaligen Mittelpolen," January 17, 1940.
[135] NARA T-81/VoMi 322/2409574ff: Rapp, "Erfahrungsbericht über die Umsiedlung von Polen und Juden aus dem Reichsgau Wartheland," January 26, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/3/188/39: Rapp to Schwarzhuber, January 15, 1940.
[136] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/6-7: Müller to Rapp, December 29, 1939.
[137] Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (=IPN) Fond 358/259/109: Gellert to Landrat Ostrowo, February 9, 1940.
[138] IPN Fond 358/259/73: Wolf to Umsiedlungslager Litzmannstadt, Wiesenstr. 4, September 1, 1940.

the significance of language, religion, education, and patriotism, the main thrust of their supplications had to do with blood descent – probably what they thought their Nazi correspondents wanted to hear – though whereas Wolf focused primarily on ethnic ties, Gellert went out of his way to mention the "ancestral passports" that millions of Germans filled out to distinguish themselves from Jews and other "racial aliens."[139] On another level, such letters reveal that, from the very beginning of the war, German civilians were able to exercise a measure of influence over the prosecution of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik*.

As the convoluted demography of the German-Polish borderlands grew ever more intractable, Nazi leaders at center and periphery tempered the scope of the "evacuations" and embraced a much more inclusive policy line. Alarmed by the news that they had inadvertently discarded so many fellow "ethnic comrades," they now worried about the forfeiture of "racially valuable ethnic aliens" as well. The Nazis, in short, started to act upon the myth of "lost German blood," beginning with Hitler, who in late 1939 consented to the Germanization of up to one million people (he specified "Polonized Germans," German spouses in mixed marriages, and individuals from the *Zwischenschicht*).[140] As one NSDAP official in West Prussia commented, "History unfortunately shows a wealth of tragic cases in which Germans fought against their own people for the interests of a foreign state… The Führer has repeatedly emphasized in his speeches that the time when German blood benefits other nations must be brought to a permanent end."[141] Himmler followed up on this endorsement shortly thereafter. On January 18, 1940 he ordered security operatives in western Poland to submit the files of all "dubious ethnic Germans" to him for a personal decision.[142] The chief SS functionary in the Warthegau, Wilhelm Koppe, had already chastised regional civil servants on January 6 for overlooking "persons of German stock" (*Deutschstämmige*), who ostensibly could not be identified with conventional nationality criteria because they had been "submerged in Polishness."[143] A subsequent directive stated, "Examinations of German descent must be implemented with the greatest precision. Wherever doubts exist, the person in question must be exempted from evacuation in all cases."[144] Participants at a conference of high-ranking police leaders in Berlin on January 30 – chaired by Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the SD – likewise resolved that "neither ethnic Germans nor persons of German stock may be deported, also no Kashubes, Masurians, and similar peoples… [since] they have racially intermingled with the German people."[145] Even Greiser and his colleagues retreated from their previous stance of *völkisch* exclusivity and acceded to the logic of racial

[139] See Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 76.
[140] Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 123.
[141] Wilhelm Löbsack, "Zur Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik," in *Die Volkstumsfrage im Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen*, ed. Wilhelm Löbsack (Danzig: Gauschulungsamt der NSDAP, 1942), 16-17.
[142] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/9: Creutz to Koppe, Rediess, and Bach-Zelewski, January 18, 1940.
[143] USHMMA 15.015M/1/96/5-6: Koppe to Regierungspräsidenten, Oberbürgermeister, and Landräte in Wartheland, January 6, 1940.
[144] USHMMA 15.015M/2/99/24-25: Koppe to Regierungspräsidenten, Oberbürgermeister, Landräte, SD-Abschnitte, and Stapo(leit)stellen in Wartheland, January 20, 1940.
[145] USHMMA 15.015M/2/109/1-6: Eichmann to Koppe, February 1, 1940.

imperialism. Coulon instructed Rapp not to expel anyone under investigation by the DVL offices as a borderline case, because otherwise there was a possibility that "valuable blood" would be "lost to the German *Volksgemeinschaft*." In January 1940, the Gauleiter also added a Group C to the DVL in order to encompass the groups Hitler had recently approved for Germanization.[146] The following month, SS resettlement technicians even awarded wholesale immunity from deportation to subjects with German-sounding names and congregants of German Protestant, German Catholic, or Polish Protestant churches – inferring that religious confession might denote Germanic ancestors. [147] All of these moves are telling signs of the dramatic extent to which the Nazis widened the net in early 1940.

Yet if it seemed like everyone now shared the same priority, there continued to be disagreements over where to draw the line. This was especially true when it came to "renegades." For Egon Leuschner, the RPA official who ran the DVL branch office in Kalisz, people whose "connections to Germandom" had "only slightly fallen off… required only slight inducement to shed their thin Polish veneer," and even those who had "already undergone assimilation and become ethnic Poles" could still be "retrieved" because they had not "actively fought against Germandom." Yet his tolerance did not extend to "active and nationally Polonized persons" who were guilty of political subversion or acts of violence against Germans.[148] Stuckart and the Interior Ministry had already proposed roughly the same categorical distinctions. The problem with this view, however, was that the Polish intelligentsia and national elite – the primary targets of the mass shootings, arrests, and deportations being carried out at the time by Nazi security forces – apparently possessed the greatest amount of "racially valuable German blood." After a voracious bout of research into local census data, Rapp speculated that some sixteen thousand "persons of German stock" belonged to Polish nationalist organizations, of which 1,497 stemmed from "pure German families" and thirty-two held positions of authority.[149] Police and administrative officials in the Warthegau noticed that members of the Polish underground resistance fit under this rubric as well. In January 1940, one SD officer counted more than fifteen hundred men with "pure German names" among the captains of guerrilla units recently taken into custody.[150] The following month, the Landrat of Turek requested guidance from Rapp on how to deal with two individuals who occupied command roles in a Polish militia, yet simultaneously paid membership dues to the German People's Union – a right-wing, pro-Nazi political party. Although standing orders dictated the automatic expulsion of anyone who belonged to Polish paramilitary outfits, the Landrat did not know "whether these measures should also

[146] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/5: Coulon to Rapp, December 4, 1939. On the DVL, see Koehl, *RKFDV,* 80-81.

[147] USHMMA 15.015M/4/252/8: Krumey to Koppe and Sparmann, June 24, 1940. Also see Rutherford, *Prelude*, 155. Koppe later scaled back this general deferment, electing to make judgments on a case-by-case basis, through it remained in full effect for several months.

[148] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 275-276.

[149] NARA T-81/VoMi 322/2409574ff: Rapp, "Erfahrungsbericht über die Umsiedlung von Polen und Juden aus dem Reichsgau Wartheland," January 26, 1940.

[150] USHMMA 15.015M/2/107/44: Seidl, "Vermerk betr. Besprechungen mit Hstf. Eichmann," January 23, 1940.

apply to persons of German stock."[151] The RuSHA representative assigned to Upper Silesia confirmed a similar pattern there: "Experience has shown that the leaders of Polish insurgent and resistance movements have a considerable proportion of Nordic blood, which enables them to be active in contrast to the fatalistic Slavic elements."[152] With this in mind, Rapp declared on February 6 that "persons of German stock… must not be evacuated… even if [they are] politically troublesome."[153]

Such expansive deferments triggered a backlash among SS security personnel, many of whom refused to comply with Rapp's instructions. In response to an inquiry from the Berlin editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter* concerning a group of displaced German farmers in Marianówka, one SD officer opined the following to a colleague in Poznań: "Given the fact that this land was German for over one hundred years, it must obviously be true that a portion of these Poles have relatives who today live as good Germans in the Old Reich. This occurrence is a common feature in border districts, but it changes nothing about the Polish character of the deportees."[154] For him, ethnic-political security remained paramount, and German descent only had relevance insofar as it was untainted by Polonization. A report from Ohlendorf dated January 17, 1940 likewise shows that, while some SD men had come around to the idea of "pandering to Nordic Poles," many still balked at the prospect of trying to win over "fanatical German-haters." Discussing the issue of "Polonized Protestant Germans" in the vicinity of Łódź and Ciechanów who had "gone over to the Polish side" under the tutelage of Bishop Juliusz Bursche, Ohlendorf expressed confidence that even anti-German political conduct did not obviate "the possibility of a return to German *Volkstum*" for these "blood Germans" – so long as they were "removed from the eastern territories and subjected to a probationary stint in pure German districts in western or central Germany." But he also spoke of "agreement among all involved that renegades who have been especially active should be treated like Poles anyway," and observed "a difference of opinion regarding the treatment of renegades" who had "behaved in a manner hostile to Germandom."[155] These attitudes were fast becoming irrelevant to the official guidelines dictated from Berlin, though that did not immediately halt insubordination.[156] Heydrich prohibited the expulsion of all "persons of German stock" on January 30 "without regard to whether [they] have behaved in anti-German manner," yet Rapp still had to reiterate to subordinates on several occasions that this ban pertained to "renegades" as well.[157]

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[151] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/12: Landrat Turek to Rapp, February 20, 1940.
[152] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/189: Scholtz, "Richtlinien für Eindeutschung polnischer Familien," March 5, 1942.
[153] USHMMA 15.015M/1/96/20-21: Rapp to Oberbürgermeister and Landräte in Wartheland, February 6, 1940.
[154] USHMMA 15.015M/3/164/1: SD Neutomischel to SD Posen, April 8, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/3/164/2: Völkischer Beobachter Berlin to Gestapo Berlin, January 26, 1940.
[155] BA R 58/147/69-70: Ohlendorf, "Meldung über das Renegatproblem im ehemaligen Mittelpolen," January 17, 1940. Bursche was an influential bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession and an outspoken opponent of Nazism.
[156] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/13: Höppner to Ehlich, June 14, 1940.
[157] USHMMA 15.015M/2/109/1-6: Eichmann to Koppe, February 1, 1940. See, for instance, USHMMA 15.015M/4/252/2: Rapp to UWZ Sieradsch, April 11, 1940.

There was also a heated debate over how to proceed with Poles who had "Nordic-looking" physical features, yet could not furnish evidence of German ancestry. Coulon argued that such individuals should at least obtain a temporary reprieve; if they turned out to be "undesirable," the Gestapo could always deport them later.[158] It was Himmler and his coterie of race and resettlement experts in Berlin, of course, who lobbied most stridently in favor of integrating foreigners on the basis of race alone, regardless of whether their documentary pedigree actually listed any German forebears. Ohlendorf for one claimed that "The usual linguistic concept of Slavdom disguises the fact that Slavdom does not represent a racial entity, but rather consists of various racial groups. The decisive criteria for a distinction must therefore be race, not cultural consciousness or language."[159] While adamant that "individual confession is in no way a ticket to German nationality or freedom from evacuation," and resolute in their desire "to cleanse the alien population," the SS also aspired to an "extraction of all German blood from the Poles," operating from the assumption that a sufficient "Nordic bloodline" in any given person outweighed the presence of "inferior racial strains."[160] This was the old colonial fantasy of racial diffusionism come alive in an East-Central European setting, and though implicit in the conventions of the Nuremberg Laws, to many Nazi Party ideologues it sounded like madness. One such figure, Theodor Oberländer, alleged in the spring of 1940 that assimilation in this mold "would contradict our racial principles, our ethnic principles, and the meaning of our fight for new *Lebensraum*."[161] Dr. Kurt Haussmann voiced his dissent by paraphrasing *Mein Kampf*: "Any attempt to assimilate a foreign people into the master race through the adoption of the German language and German culture by a people of the lower race is, according to the view of the Führer, not Germanization, but rather 'de-Germanization.'"[162]

In the face of such criticism, Himmler and his minions went to great lengths to differentiate their platform from "old-fashioned" Germanization. Wetzel and Hecht had already done much of the work on this front in their memorandum of November 1939 by labeling the process as "ethnomorphosis" (*Umvolkung*). "Authentic ethnomorphosis," as they described it, took place through conventional methods of nationalization and socio-political programming. But it also entailed a "permanent intellectual and spiritual entry into the ethnic substance of another people," a kind of organic psychological conversion that could only occur for individuals predisposed with the same racial makeup as the host society: "If we

[158] USHMMA 15.015M/3/159/5: Coulon to Rapp, December 4, 1939.
[159] BA R 49/61/70-77: Ohlendorf to Himmler, May 24, 1940.
[160] USHMMA 15.015M/2/109/1-6: Eichmann to Koppe, February 1, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/3/188/39: Rapp to Schwarzhuber, January 15, 1940. For the third quote, see Bundesarchiv Berlin – Berlin Document Center (=BDC) SSO/194: Fähndrich, "Die politischen Aufgaben der Umsiedler im Reich," September 28, 1941.
[161] Theodor Oberländer, "Von der Front des Volkstumskampfes," *Neues Bauerntum* 4-5 (April-May 1940): 127-130.
[162] Kurt Haussmann, "Die Bauernsiedlung in den neuen Ostgauen," *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 10 (1940): 417.

linguistically Germanize several million racially alien Poles and in this way make them into 'Germans,' they will still always retain their racially alien Slavic soul."[163]

It fell to a group of specialists at the Staff Main Office for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity (*Stabshauptamt*, RKF) – the coordinating body of the SS resettlement apparatus – to propagate this message in the public sphere on Himmler's behalf. Dr. Ernst Fähndrich wrote in one publication that "In treating with people of a foreign ethnicity, one must distinguish between those who, being from an alien race, will never merge into the German nation, and those who became alienated from the German nation with respect to ethnicity and language, yet belong to it by blood."[164] In a separate article, the chief of the RKF, Ulrich Greifelt, contended that "The recovery of German blood has nothing to do with what one commonly refers to as 'Germanization'… In order to avoid semantic and other errors, it must be emphasized that this is not a question of assimilation or Germanization, but rather the reclamation of lost German blood [*Wiedergewinnung verlorenen deutschen Blutes*]."[165] Greifelt and his underlings believed that a simple change in terminology would clarify such nuances, so they replaced the customary word for Germanization (*Germanisierung*) with a new one – re-Germanization (*Wiedereindeutschung*) – though many officials also used the Nazified term for Germanization (*Eindeutschung*) interchangeably with *Wiedereindeutschung*. It would be counterproductive, these men asserted, to affirm that "racially valuable ethnic aliens" belonged to another *Volk*; to convince them that "they actually belong to the German nation," it was "first necessary to designate them with the phrase capable of *re*-Germanization, even when German descent is not verifiable."[166] Above all, RKF agents underscored the novelty of their model by conjuring stories of Germanic settlement and ethnic conflict in the East. "The history of the lands between the Warthe and the Vistula has taught us Germans a hard lesson," Greifelt reminded his readers, "[that] one must make the country into a bulwark of Germandom by implementing racial policies without compromise."[167] To exemplify what kind of people Himmler wanted to re-Germanize, Fähndrich offered up the denizens of Szwedy, a hamlet outside Lublin, whose migration he traced back to the days of the Swedish monarch Charles VII (1697-1745). Though their appearance was "thoroughly Germanic," he told an audience of ethnic Germans, the villagers "consider themselves Poles and renounce all associations

[163] BA R 186/35: Wetzel and Hecht, "Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebiete nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte," November 25, 1939. Like many neologisms dating from this period, the word *Umvolkung* is practically untranslatable and carries a variety of connotations; it can simply mean assimilation or Germanization, though "ethnomorphosis" is probably the closest English equivalent.

[164] *Der Menscheneinsatz. Grundsätze, Anordnungen und Richtlinien* (Berlin: Hauptabteilung des RKFDV, 1940), viii. This publication includes several theoretical tracts and lists all significant RKFDV decrees pertaining to the resettlement of ethnic Germans and re-Germanizable Poles.

[165] Ulrich Greifelt, "Die Festigung deutschen Volkstums als zentrale Ostaufgabe," *Reichsverwaltungsblatt* 62 (1941): 509-514. This article can also be found in NARA T-81/VoMi 802/2435422ff.

[166] Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 131 [emphasis in original].

[167] Greifelt, "Die Festigung deutschen Volkstums als zentrale Ostaufgabe," 509-514.

with Germandom," which made their "retrieval" all the more urgent since "Poles with Germanic blood almost always provide the leadership of the Polish nation in the struggle against Germandom."[168]

At any rate, the pace of events soon rendered the indignation of detractors immaterial. As the SS retooled its mechanisms of ethnic cleansing in the winter of 1939-1940, the demands of a wartime economy gave Himmler the pretext he needed to launch a full-scale project of racial classification. The Germans had realized even before the outbreak of war that they would have to recruit Polish civilian laborers en masse, though covering the shortage of manpower on the home front did not truly affect their agenda until January 1940, when Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring decreed the importation of eight hundred thousand Polish agricultural workers by mid-March. This decision (and it was not taken lightly) clearly marked a grave setback to the goal of removing the Poles from German "living space"; as such, it provoked widespread outrage within the ranks of the NSDAP. Instead of reversing the tide of the Slavic Flood, the Nazis seemed to be inviting it right into the very heart of Germany.[169] It was at this juncture that the imperatives of racial imperialism and economic mobilization began to intertwine, though a few keen observers had foreseen such a confluence long before. The chief of the Race and Settlement Main Office, Günther Pancke, had already advised Himmler in late November 1939 to retain Poles who were "not racially or political undesirable" instead of deporting them eastward so as to insert them into the domestic labor force. If the employment of Polish workers was inevitable, he reasoned, then only those who underwent a "thorough racial inspection" beforehand should be permitted to enter the Reich, and his agency's pool of "fitness examiners" (*Eignungsprüfer*) were naturally the only ones qualified to perform such a service.[170] RuSHA personnel on the ground in Poland arrived at a similar conclusion around that time, as did some of their police colleagues, not because of the obligation to vet incoming laborers, but because the confusing ethnic conditions they encountered left no other alternative for accurately delineating German from non-German.[171] The foremost SD expert on *Volkstumspolitik* in Berlin, Dr. Hans Ehlich, supported Pancke's suggestion and further recommended that subjects ranked positively should be assimilated into the German "ethnic community."[172]

As the appetite for Polish laborers grew ever larger in early 1940, officials at the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA) – the organizational hub and nerve center of the SS security network – took steps to create a logistical structure that combined deportation, colonization, labor conscription, and racial classification into a single system under their direct control. As the head of Section III B of the RSHA – the department responsible for overseeing all programs of racial engineering in occupied Europe – Ehlich became the point man on this assignment. He began a January 25

[168] BDC SSO/194: Fähndrich, "Die politischen Aufgaben der Umsiedler im Reich," September 28, 1941.
[169] Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 84, 132-133.
[170] BA NS 2/60/51-59: Pancke to Himmler, November 20, 1939.
[171] BA NS 2/60/123-126: Brehm to RuSHA Siedlungsamt, October 21, 1939. Also see Browning, *Origins*, 47.
[172] BA R 69/1146/1-13: Ehlich, "Fernplan der Umsiedlung in den Ostgebieten," November 1939.

memorandum by announcing that "a racial inventory of the entire Polish population is absolutely necessary for overall ethnic policy in the German East," then went on to outline the formation of a Central Emigration Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle*, UWZ) that would "function as a filter for diverting the racially valuable segment of the Poles into the Old Reich and thereby staunch the hemorrhaging of "precious German blood" that would inevitably result from unregulated deportations. In Ehlich's proposed scheme, German security forces would evict Polish civilians as before to procure housing, material goods, and jobs for ethnic German Umsiedler – a concern that runs throughout the document – though now the deportees would pass through special transit camps where RuSHA race examiners and SD officers would conduct "a precise racial and political evaluation" to determine their subsequent fate.[173]

Heydrich approved Ehlich's plan on January 30 and confirmed Himmler's authorization to commence with the selection of Polish deportees "for future assimilation" according to "personal, racial, medical, security, and economic viewpoints."[174] Not long after, Pancke designed a classificatory protocol that separated Poles into three classes: group U for "all racially unfit and asocial individuals, as well as politically incriminated Polish elements," group S for "the racially average… who are certainly undesirable for assimilation, yet appear useful as seasonal laborers," and group A for "all racially high-value Poles who are desirable for assimilation."[175] These categories corresponded to the tripartite mandate of the UWZ: the "defense of German blood," the procurement of "racially bearable" laborers, and the "selection of racially superior Poles who will be naturalized in the Old Reich."[176] As they geared up for the next round of expulsions in the spring of 1940, SS officials revamped their techniques to match the blueprints composed by Ehlich and Pancke. Under the auspices of a directive from Greiser dated March 1, 1940, SD and RuSHA personnel erected bureaus for the Umwandererzentralstelle in each county of the Warthegau, anchored by a headquarters in Poznań and an auxiliary office in the industrial city of Łódź, which soon came to serve as the fulcrum of resettlement activity in the incorporated eastern territories. The "racial screening" of Polish deportees began in late March, the UWZ stations became fully operational in early April, and the first transports of "re-Germanizables" left for the Reich a short time later.[177] The "hunt for good blood" was officially on.

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[173] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/6-13: Ehlich, "Bericht betr. Errichtung von Umwandererzentralstellen," January 25, 1940. Ehlich's model bore a strong resemblance to the system of border intake stations established during the Kaiserreich to regulate the flow of Polish laborers and, after the First World War, to handle the surge of refugees pouring in from Eastern Europe; see Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 63, 73, 83, 111-115; Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 20, 34, 37.

[174] USHMMA 15.015M/2/109/1-6: Eichmann to Koppe, February 1, 1940.

[175] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/16-18: Pancke, "Richtlinien für die Auslese der polnischen Volksangehörigen in den neuen Ostgauen," undated.

[176] NARA T-81/286/VoMi 323/2409694ff: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Aussiedlungen im Rahmen der Ansetzung der Wolhynien-, Galizien- und Cholmerdeutschen (2. Nahplan) im Reichsgau Wartheland," January 20, 1940.

[177] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/15: Hofmann to Künzel, March 16, 1940; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/1: Künzel to Lorenz, May 28, 1940. For further background on the organization of the UWZ, see Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews* (London: Arnold, 1999), 7-8; Rutherford, *Prelude*, 139-140.

Then, on May 9, 1940, Himmler formally introduced the Re-Germanization Procedure with Ordinance 17/II, initially disseminated to all RKFDV offices, later published in a special booklet for public consumption. "Among the people of foreign (non-German) ethnicity in the incorporated eastern territories," the document began, "there are many who come into question for Germanization on the basis of their racial fitness. I have therefore ordered the selection of the most racially valuable Nordic families… and intend to bring these people to homes in the Old Reich."[178] In addition to the "removal of racial aliens," Greifelt noted in the decree's prefatory remarks, it was "just as indispensable to regain for Germandom the German blood existing in these districts, even in cases where the person concerned has been Polonized in language and affiliation," for these "bearers of Germanic blood" had endowed the Polish nation with "leaders who fought bitterly against their own German *Volk*, either from delusion or due to a willful or unconscious misunderstanding of their blood relationship." The WED would "make this lost German blood available to our people," fulfilling a "cardinal ethnic-political task" based on "the most decisive principle of our worldview," a "national duty" warranting energetic devotion in light of the "powerful Germanic blood that has flowed into this land in the course of the last millennium."[179] Finally, Himmler and his aides enunciated the purpose of re-Germanization as an instrument of biopolitical warfare. The WED was not just a conduit for enhanced population growth, they explained; it was a demographic weapon wielded to prevent "a further increase of the Polish intellectual class from Polonized Germanic clans" and "deprive foreign nationalities of the progeny of German leaders."[180]

We have now come full circle to the summit of May 24, 1940, when Himmler presented Hitler with his "Some Thoughts" memorandum and obtained Hitler's blessing to proceed with his ambitious project of racial consolidation. This undertaking was neither the outcome of a foreordained path nor the artifact of a preconceived design. Germanization policy took shape amid the vicissitudes of war and occupation as the Nazis grappled with the constraints of a militarized political economy and the complexities of national classification in an ethnically contested borderland region. With that being said, the WED was not simply born out of necessity; it did not emerge in a vacuum or appear out of thin air. Rather than compelling a functional redefinition or modification of Nazi racial theory, the conquest of Poland created an opportunity to act on its inherently inclusive potentialities. To address the day-to-day problems of administration in the incorporated eastern territories, officials at center and periphery drew guidance and inspiration from intellectual trends which had long since saturated German discourse, as well as from the commonplace beliefs and symbolic referents embedded in contemporary renderings of the past – elements woven into the fabric of Nazi ideology yet not distinctively National Socialist in

[178] BA R 49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940.

[179] Greifelt's prefatory remarks can be found in *Der Menschenheinsatz*, 51-52. The last set of quotes comes from his article "Die Festigung deutschen Volkstums als zentrale Ostaufgabe," 509-514.

[180] BA R 49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940. Also see BDC SSO/194: Fähndrich, "Die politischen Aufgaben der Umsiedler im Reich," September 28, 1941.

content. The disputes that embroiled policy-makers between September 1939 and May 1940 should not obscure this fact. As a metanarrative through which to interpret the legacy of Germanic migration abroad, the myth of "lost German blood" structured the perception of reality by evoking fantasies and anxieties buried deep within the collective memory of the German people. Nazi Germanization policy, in other words, was a derivative reflection of domestic concerns rooted in popular culture.

Nevertheless, it would be a grave mistake to dismiss the "hunt for good blood" as an incomparable or uniquely German phenomenon. The Nazis confronted the same ambiguous tensions that perplexed other nationalist and colonialist enterprises all over the world: between social and biological understandings of behavior, between the relative importance of environmental versus inborn factors, between a faith in the malleability of human beings and the certainty that some were incorrigibly defective. The Re-Germanization Procedure provided a medium for reconciling these oppositions by bringing the imagined racial identity of favored foreign subjects into conformity with the dominant cultural and political values of the Third Reich. It was on this conceptual field that debates over how to treat conquered populations would play out across much of occupied Europe, revealing a dynamic common not only to Germany's overseas colonies, but to a wide range of imperial powers that combined genocidal techniques with the conviction that non-Europeans could be absorbed into the "White race" and integrated into metropolitan society, physically subsumed and culturally "improved." For the National Socialists as well, extermination and assimilation were two sides of the same coin, two means to the same end, not mutually exclusive strategies. They did not "bring home" xenophobic ideas pertaining to non-whites so much as they followed the synergy of overlapping idioms that had linked the colonial domain with the development of European nationalism for centuries. The gradual racialization of non-Geman ethnic groups goes a long way toward explaining why the Nazis unleashed methods of violence usually resorted to only in the colonies. But it does not account for an equally significant vector of continuity: the inheritance of assimilation as a necessary component of nation- and empire-building. National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* must therefore be placed within this larger transnational context as well as within the distinctive history of modern Germany. But if the Nazis thought they had found a solution to the conundrums that beset them, a fundamental question still remained unresolved: how exactly did one define Germanness in terms of race? In order to understand how they went about answering this question, we must turn to the methodology of racial selection in occupied Poland, and the men who carried it out.

Chapter Two: Selection

"Give me a laboratory and I will raise the world."

–Bruno Latour

On May 17, 194,1 a Polish teenager named Olga Skibinska stood naked before a German man in a run-down building in the western district of Łódź that housed the regional headquarters, or Aussenstelle, of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office. She had arrived in the city that very day, transported there in unsanitary conditions from Toruń some one hundred miles to the north, where the Nazis had evicted local inhabitants in order to replace them with ethnic Germans. As with hundreds of thousands of Polish civilians who passed through the processing camps in Łódź, the presiding official, a race examiner from the RuSHA, would now use cutting-edge scientific techniques to decide Olga's fate as well. He scrutinized the features of her body with meticulous precision, noting the shape of her skull and the contours of her face, measuring the width of her pelvis, poking and prodding her flesh. In contrast to the vast majority of deportees, however, who were rejected, he determined that Olga belonged to the "Nordic race" and was thus "capable of re-Germanization" – a label she apparently accepted without resistance. Acquiescent or not, eight days later she traveled to the town of Sulz outside Stuttgart to work in the home of a German family and join the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft*. Olga Skibinska was now officially an inductee of the Re-Germanization Procedure.[1]

It has become all too common to depict racial classification under the Third Reich as a perverse anomaly within the ostensibly value-free and objective history of modern science.[2] In their enormously influential work *The Racial State*, Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann contended, for instance, that National Socialism propagated a "corrupt," "dubious," and "inherently distorted" species of scholarship that fundamentally deviated from the traditions of "legitimate" scientific inquiry.[3] Paul Weindling has presented a highly similar account in his more recent study on the exploitation of human test subjects for Nazi medical experiments.[4] A separate school of thought, on the other hand, essentially

[1] USHMMA 15.021M/5/35/5: Skibinska to Dongus, May 12, 1942. For a description of the selection process, see Johan Meijer and Diete Oudesluijs, "Sag, wann haben diese Leiden endlich mal ein Ende? Schicksale polnischer Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter," in *Zur Arbeit Gezwungen. Zwangsarbeit in Deutschland 1940-1945*, eds. Rimco Spanjer, Diete Oudesluijs, and Johan Meijer (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1999), 123.

[2] Mario Biagoli, "Science, Modernity, and the Holocaust," in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution*, ed. Saul Friedländer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 185-187, 195-198. For an introduction to the vast literature on this topic, see Margit Szöllösi-Janze, *Science in the Third Reich* (New York: Berg, 2001). For another good overview, see the introduction in Rory Yeomans and Anton Weiss-Wendt, eds., *Racial Science in Hitler's New Europe* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 1-34.

[3] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56.

[4] Paul Weindling, *Victims and Survivors of Nazi Human Experiments: Science and Suffering in the Holocaust* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

turns this interpretation on its head by framing such practices as a direct outgrowth of the "spirit of science" – an ultra-utilitarian rationale fostered by industrial capitalism and the secular bureaucratic state. Scholars on this side of the fence maintain that the selection of people like Olga was little more than an aptitude test designed to ascertain an individual's productive capacity and economic value.[5] Each of these positions unfortunately suffers from a remarkably problematic lack of historicization that invests the topic with presentist notions contemporaries did not have to abide by.[6] As distasteful as it may be, we must recognize that a wide spectrum of scholars at the time conceived of race as a given epistemological reality, that ideas now rightly considered untenable or absurd were once regarded as perfectly valid. We must accept that the Nazis, in their own way, engaged in the production of knowledge, however bogus and destructive it turned out to be. There was a method to the madness of racial classification, one that necessarily entailed a conscious design laden with historical meaning. As Lorraine Daston reminds us, science "depends in essential ways upon highly specific constellations of emotions and values" that shape "how scientists in a given time and place… cultivate certain mental habits and methods of investigation."[7] The present chapter explores how these constellations, mental habits, and methods of investigation informed the construction of race in the occupied territories of the wartime Third Reich by recreating the methodology the Nazis employed to categorize foreign-born subjects. We will first query the historical antecedents that shaped the cosmology and institutional culture of the RuSHA Eignungsprüfer, then move into a discussion of their efforts to catalogue ethnic German resettlers and identify Polish candidates for re-Germanization. And as we will see, far from merely the province of a small band of deluded extremists or a pliant tool of impersonal bureaucratic forces, the praxis of transforming race into a tactile phenomenon functioned to a large extent through the agency of individual human beings.

As Olga underwent her evaluation, a young SS-Obersturmbannführer worked nearby, coordinating the entire RuSHA apparatus in the incorporated eastern territories from his office at the Aussenstelle. Fritz Schwalm was in many ways the archetype of an ideal SS functionary: ambitious, highly educated, energetic, fanatical, and ruthless. He had studied anthropology, ethnology, biology, history, geography, and German literature at the universities of Marburg, Munich, and Tübingen, mingling with *völkisch* right-wing student groups before joining the NSDAP in 1929 and the SS in 1932. He was only thirty years old when he assumed command of the Aussenstelle in the fall of 1939. A true

[5] See, for instance, Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002). The outlines of this argument and the term itself comes from Detlev J.K. Peukert, "Die Genesis der 'Endlösung' aus dem Geist der Wissenschaft," in *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne*, ed. Detlev Peukert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 102-104.

[6] As argued by Sheila Faith Weiss in *The Nazi Symbiosis: Human Genetics and Politics in the Third Reich* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 6-8. Also see Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker, "Scientists, Engineers, and National Socialism," in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, eds. Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5-7.

[7] Lorraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 2nd Series, vol. 10, Constructing Knowledge in the History of Science (1995): 3, 5-6, 23.

embodiment of the "fighting administration" created by Himmler, Schwalm would later join Einsatzgruppe A in September 1941 and personally take part in the massacre of Jews and other "enemies of the state" in the Soviet Union.[8] If Schwalm was a "young ultraracist," his deputy and eventual successor, Walter Dongus, was the "classic example of a *völkisch* radical."[9] Ten years older than Schwalm, a veteran of the First World War, the Freikorps movement, and the Nazi struggle for power, Dongus had served as a schoolteacher in Ehingen before heading to Łódź in the autumn of 1940 to work for the RuSHA as an Eignungsprüfer. As successive chiefs of the Aussenstelle, these two men were directly responsible for "sifting out" re-Germanizable Poles like Olga Skabinska, though they also kept in close contact with their immediate superior in Berlin, Otto Hofmann. Throughout the 1930s, Hofmann had overseen the vetting procedure for prospective SS members and their wives; he therefore brought plenty of relevant experience to the task of racial classification in occupied Poland – first at the helm of the RuSHA Race Office and, after the spring of 1940, as director of the entire agency.[10]

As Race and Settlement Leaders (*RuS-Führer*), Schwalm, Dongus, and Hofmann represented a particular class of SS officer. Part professional scientist, part racial theorist, part technocrat, they fought their version of the war with craniometers, calipers, index cards, and cameras, though none were strangers to violence. Nor were they simply "desk murderers" disconnected from the consequences of their actions; they not only witnessed the deportation and execution of hundreds of thousands of people, but often governed who would live or die through the face to face interactions of racial selection. At the highpoint of the war, there were around five hundred RuS-Führer and subordinate personnel operating in the Reich and the occupied territories, carrying out assignments that afforded them a crucial role in the implementation of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* from northern France to the Crimea. At any one time, between sixty and eighty of them served as Eignungsprüfer. Although these so-called race experts came from a variety of generational, occupational, and social backgrounds, they nonetheless regarded themselves as the primary architects of the Nazi New Order in Europe and considered the mission to locate "lost German blood" to be their "highest duty."[11]

RuSHA officials actively promoted a scientific air that enhanced the credibility of their function within the Nazi regime. Before receiving the special certificate that authorized them to conduct racial examinations, the Eignungsprüfer had to complete a four-week-long instructional course in physical anthropology, hereditary biology, population policy, and eugenics (or "racial hygiene," as the Germans

[8] See the personnel files on Friedrich Schwalm in BDC SSO/121B and RS/F5175.

[9] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 177; Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 614.

[10] See the personnel files on Walter Dongus in BDC SSO/160 and RS/A5559 as well as those on Otto Hofmann in BDC SSO/111A and RS/C476.

[11] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/113-114: Hofmann to Rüterbusch, July 10, 1942.

called it) that covered topics like "Selection Principles of the SS and the Protocol of SS Fitness Investigations," "The Racial Composition of the German People," and "Ancestral Science and Modern Hereditary Research."[12] The curriculum also entailed practice evaluations staged with live test subjects. Upon completion of these classes, each aspirant then had to spend six months working as an intern under the supervision of a certified examiner.[13] Their training did not end there either. Schwalm insisted that they "should be kept up to date with the newest studies and developments in the field of racial-scientific and demographic-political work" and "strive to continue educating themselves in their professional field as much as possible."[14] He kept them well-supplied with pertinent reading material too, from a "Pocketbook of Racial-Scientific Measuring Technique" to subscriptions to the journal of the Archive for Racial and Social Biology to "classics" with titles like "Nordic Beauty," "German Heads of the Nordic Race," and "The Language of the Human Face."[15] Like any good academic community, moreover, the RuSHA held regular conferences where examiners met to exchange ideas and discuss tradecraft.[16]

Yet despite these pretensions to elite intellectual status, the principal beliefs animating their methodology extended far beyond SS circles and betrayed much deeper historical roots. The notion that mankind can be divided into discrete races is as old as modern science itself, as is the subfield of physiognomics, with its rendering of the body as an alphabet of encoded meanings that signify the inherent worth of every human being.[17] The Eignungsprüfer did not have to look very hard to corroborate their views. The very earliest anthropological treatises and techniques of the Enlightenment era had long since fashioned racial taxonomies around the inheritability of physical characteristics – skin color, skull shape, hair texture, jaw size, etc. – and both the Atlantic slave trade and the so-called caste system (*sistema de castas*) in colonial Latin America provided European scholars with testing grounds in which to work out their nascent typologies.[18] Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth,

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[12] BA NS 2/88/39-44: "Programm für Eignungsprüferlehrgang des RuSHA vom 6 bis 16 April 1940 in der Reichsschule Rüggelheim," undated; USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/171-172: Schwalm to Hofmann, February 5, 1941.

[13] BA NS 2/94/58: Hofmann to Scholtz, September 9, 1942. Also see Matthias Hamann, "Erwünscht und unerwünscht: Die rassenpsychologische Selektion der Ausländer," in *Herrenmensch und Arbeitsvölker. Ausländische Arbeiter und Deutsche 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen August et. al. (Berlin: Rothbuch, 1989), 149.

[14] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/173-174: Schwalm to Mißner, February 5, 1941.

[15] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/61-62: "Liste rassekundlicher Bücher und Lehrmittel für das RuS-Hauptamt-SS," undated. Hans F.K. Günther was the author of the first two titles.

[16] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 199-200.

[17] On the discourse of physiognomics, see Claudia Schmölders, *Das Vorurteil im Leibe. Eine Einführung in die Physiognomik* (Berlin: Akademie, 2007), 1-12; Richard T. Gray, *About Face: German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), ; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981), 41, 57, 71; Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848- c.1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2-3, 141, 144-145. Also see the collection of essays in Marianne Henn and Holger Pausch, eds., *Body Dialectics in the Age of Goethe* (New York: Rodopi, 2003).

[18] George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 16-18; Robert Proctor, "From 'Anthropologie' to 'Rassenideologie,'' in *Bones, Bodies, Behavior; Essays on Biological Anthropology*, ed. George Stocking, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 138-179. Also see Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, MA: Little-Brown, 1967), 1-6, 43-54; Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Universiy Press, 2011), 167-176.

juridical proceedings related to civil rights, paternity, and marriage in the United States had also customarily relied on blood quantum legislation and graduated racial categories (mulattoes, quadroons, octaroons, etc.) established on the basis of morphological attributes.[19] The list of precedents goes on and on: in Rwanda, the Germans and later the Belgians classified native tribal groups and social classes according to their height, complexion, and pulchritude (which is where the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi comes from), while in French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies colonial administrators employed similar criteria to ascertain the genealogical pedigree of mixed-race children.[20]

It did not take all that long for these practices to filter back to the European metropoles, Germany in particular. Already in the days of the Kaiserreich, a number of scientists and physicians had compiled statistics on the distribution of "Aryan" features among the German population and taught their pupils that European nationalities could be distinguished through "racial characteristics that were publicly perceivable by any lay person."[21] During the First World War, a team of up-and-coming anthropologists (including Otto Reche) supplied this contention with reams of biometric data amassed from investigations of enemy soldiers (mainly Slavs) in German and Austrian captivity.[22] Perhaps most influentially, Hans F.K. Günther posited that each of the six European "primal races," as well as their non-European foils, exhibited a distinctive psychosomatic constitution and spiritual essence, a "racial soul" embodied in unvarying archetypes and detectable through what he called *Anschauung*, a kind of intuitive awareness of innate mental and behavioral qualities.[23] This hypothesis shaped Nazi policy-making in a variety of different domains. As the Interior Ministry set about implementing racial legislation in the 1930s, its leading jurists increasingly grounded their statutes in Günther's conception of "racial phenotype" (*rassische Erscheinungsbild*), whereas the Reich Food Estate (*Reichsnährstand*, RNS) adopted his model to vet applicants for grants of farmland, proceeding from the assumption that "people who have a similar appearance usually also show a similar characterological and psychological demeanor."[24] The founder and future head of the RuSHA Race Office, Dr. Bruno K. Schultz, chose the same framework as a

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[19] Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-5, 9-11. Also see Ian F. Haney-López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

[20] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 76-102; Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and Cultural Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Racial Classification and History*, ed. E. Nathaniel Gates (New York: Garland, 1997), 208-246.

[21] Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 38-39, 135-136.

[22] Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 3-13.

[23] Hans F.K. Günther, *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. by G.C. Wheeler (New York: Dutton, 1927), 3-5.

[24] Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 111, 176.BA NS 2/60/20-48: Benz, "6 Jahre Auslese bei der Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums," undated. Also see Uwe Mai, *Rasse und Raum. Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 55, 62-63.

template for the SS. A professor of biology at the University of Berlin and well-known racial theorist in his own right, Schultz supervised the training of the race examiners and devised their methodology for screening applicants for the SS, who had to conform to a prescribed list of physical characteristics as well as demonstrate perfect "hereditary health" (*Erbgesundheit*) and impeccable German descent dating back to the year 1800 (1750 for officers).[25]

Yet while the Eignungsprüfer were firmly convinced that their approach accorded with the rules of empirical observation and natural law, their guiding philosophy actually revolved around an incredibly fanciful brand of quasi-religious mysticism. This should not be surprising. There were certainly plenty of occult beliefs floating around German and Austrian right-wing circles during the early decades of the twentieth century, when the "Nordic Idea" began to spread throughout academia and eventually grew into something of a movement. Schultz, for instance, was a devotee of esoteric sects like the Thule Society and the Nordic Ring, as was Dr. Fritz Lenz, one of the most prominent biologists in Nazi Germany. The same flavor of hyper-nationalist spirituality also permeated the branches of the German Youth Movement, especially *völkisch* agrarian offshoots like the Artamenen Society, which counted a young Heinrich Himmler among its acolytes.[26] At the core of the metaphysical ideas that tied these groups together stood a "symbology of the blood," saturated with messianic Christian overtones, yet equally rooted in a "biopolitical dispositive" that empowered the state with a mandate to subordinate the rights of the individual to the goal of "healthy" population growth.[27] For all their acute pessimism concerning biological decadence, the race experts of the SS nevertheless saw a path to salvation that would revitalize the German *Volk* and ensure its rise to global hegemony. From their perspective, racial classification was a progressive endeavor implemented with all the trappings of a modern bureaucracy; but it was also a divine crusade to render the ethnic corpus sacrosanct and immortal, a redemptive and millenarian quest to bring about the transcendence of a chosen racial elect. Perhaps nothing conveys this simultaneously scientific and religious bent more than the term RuSHA officials favored as a synecdoche for their handiwork – selection (*Auslese*) – conjuring as it does both the tenets of Darwinian evolution and the supernatural omnipotence of God.

It would be a mistake to construe the resonance of these ideas as something limited to high-brow intellectuals and Nazi zealots alone, for they ultimately rested "between a discourse of popular racial and

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[25] BDC SSO/110B: Personnel file of Bruno K. Schultz; BA NS 2/89/77-78: Schultz to Hofmann, July 17, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/171-172: Schwalm to Hofmann, February 5, 1941; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 54-56.

[26] Hans-Jürgen Lutzhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920-1940* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1971); Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 24-26, 37; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 1-2, 33; Hans Mommsen, *Von Weimar nach Auschwitz. Zur Geschichte Deutchlands in der Weltkriegsepoche* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999), 14-15; Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 56-58.

[27] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 19-20.

cultural stereotypes and a would-be science of human diversity."[28] Just like every other Western nation, Germans had become well attuned to iconographies of race long before the First World War through portrayals of "exotic" colonial peoples in adventure novels, advertisements, and ethnological expositions.[29] In the fraught atmosphere of the 1920s, even as understandings of the *Volk* as an organic, supranational community gained unprecedented credence, these stereotypical depictions merged with older renderings of Germany itself as a "racially differentiated space" to produce a concise explanation for the intensified social and political divisions of the Weimar Republic. As a consequence, notions of racial corporeality found widespread acceptance, invading popular culture not only via academic texts, but through the artistic media of sculpture, painting, photography, and film.[30] The Nazis amplified this trend by coordinating a modern visual culture machine that broadcast their "aesthetic of the racially fit" through seemingly apolitical forms of mass entertainment that offered "an imaginary fulfillment of the desire for physical, spiritual, and national perfection."[31] Their representations of beautiful and grotesque bodies facilitated the construction of identity by making it possible for ordinary people to grasp concepts of race, but they also promoted adherence to normative behaviors that affirmed traditional conservative hierarchies.[32] Racial discourses, in other words, were not merely hypothetical; they were nurtured and sustained by everyday social structures and personal interactions.[33]

The popularity of eugenics served a comparable function. Although usually appearing in anodyne phrases like "health of the nation" and "health of future generations," the discourse of racial hygiene appealed to upper- and middle-class audiences largely because it equated hereditary "fitness" with bourgeois values and addressed contemporary concerns about the erosion of time-honored boundaries between races, sexes, and social classes.[34] While ingrained to a certain extent in a capitalist logic that endorsed the exploitation of native labor in the colonies as well as productivity among Europeans, the allure of eugenic thought resided more in its effectiveness as a biological idiom for articulating moral anxieties over white prestige and global hegemony, as a utopian construct for refracting social malaise

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[28] Christopher Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial Anthropology, and Genetics in the Dialectic of the Volk* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 36.

[29] David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1-24, 305-326.

[30] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 7; Claudia Schmölders and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *Gesichter der Weimarer Republik. Eine physiognomische Kulturgeschichte* (Cologne: DuMont, 2000), 8; Claudia Schmölders, *Hitler's Face: The Biography of an Image* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12-13., 21, 90, 129.

[31] Claudia Koonz, "'More Masculine Men, More Feminine Women': The Iconography of Nazi Racial Hatreds," in *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*, ed. Amir Weiner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 104, 108-109. Also see Schmölders, *Das Vorurteil*, 12. The quote is frm Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty*, 202.

[32] George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12-13, 24; Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty*, 2, 5.

[33] Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty*, 82, 201.

[34] Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll, and Kurt Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene. Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1992), 57; Sheila Faith Weiss, *Race Hygiene and National Efficiency: The Eugenics of Wilhelm Schallmayer* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 10, 23.

into a readily intelligible narrative in which the "ills of modernity" could be attached to medical pathologies and "cured" through extirpation.[35] It is worth emphasizing that the neuroses on display here were hardly confined to Nazi Germany. Indeed, they preoccupied a wide range of scholars, policy-makers, and captains of industry throughout Europe and North America, where diminishing birthrates seemed to herald the decline of the "White race" as a phenomenon that cut across national lines yet also had dramatic implications for the demographic struggle among competing imperial powers.[36] Early twentieth-century fears of reduced virility and stamina, along with their transparently gendered footing in a perceived crisis of masculinity, inspired all sorts of authoritarian public health measures designed to enhance the "quality and quantity" of the population by sequestering "inferior bloodlines" until they "died out" – and not just in the extralegal sphere of the colonial realm.[37] When we consider the extensive use of aptitude testing all over the Western world, the restrictive immigration quotas enacted by the United States, or the practice of compulsory sterilization in that country as well as in Sweden, it becomes quite apparent that German racial hygiene cannot be understood as a sui generis fixation, even if there was no analogue for the Nazis' state-sponsored euthanasia campaign.[38] What is perhaps most interesting for our purposes, however, is that many figures within the international scientific community championed something very much akin to the Re-Germanization Procedure as an additional remedy to the menace of degeneration. From the late nineteenth century right up through the interwar period, pro-natalists in France, for instance, had recommended that "racially similar" immigrants from other European lands should be "absorbed" into the French body politic at home as well as in the colonies through a combined platform of cultural assimilation, government monitoring, and selective intermarriage.[39]

If all of these factors disclose an uncanny resemblance between the classificatory impulses of National Socialism and the obsession with racial nomenclature that pervaded the European colonial mind, the last example indicates that the connection was not always what one might expect. Alongside a more

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[35] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 62-63. For further background on eugenics in its original Anglo-American context, see Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 111-139; Edwin Black, *War against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Washington, D.C.: Dialog, 2003), 21-37.

[36] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 76-103; Margaret Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 9-12. Also see the collection of essays in Marius Turda and Paul Weindling, eds., *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940* (Budapast: Central European University Press, 2007).

[37] William H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity: The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-10; Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Durham, MD: Duke University Press, 2006), 166-175; Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 13-14, 144-147.

[38] On aptitude tests and immigration quotas, see Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 176-184, 194-201, 204-210, 260-262. On sterilization in the United States, see Black, *War against the Weak*, 87-124. Also see Alberto Spektorowski, "The Eugenic Tradition in Socialism: Sweden, Germany, and the Soviet Union," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 1 (January 2004): 84-106.

[39] Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 35-36; Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire*, 27, 246-247.

commonplace rhetoric of "blood purity" and apartheid, there was also a strong tendency (in Brazil, Australia, and Polynesia, for example) to promote racial mixing as a means of "whitening" and enhancing the racial substance of aboriginal peoples (especially those of hybrid descent) by "breeding out their color."[40] The National Socialists and their scientific backers inherited a version of this stance, now reconfigured to correspond to ethnic groups within Europe. Eugen Fischer, another highly respected Nazi biologist, argued that the amalgamation of the Nordic and Dinaric races had strengthened the German *Volk*, making it far more intelligent and creative than other nations through an "equilibrium" that elevated the resultant offspring without precipitating regression.[41] His mentor, Felix von Luschan, had likewise asserted that a process of "de-mixing" (*Entmischung*) could occur over the span of several generations, with unalloyed "race-types" emerging from hybrid pairings, though only insofar as "harmful traits" did not enter into the picture in the meantime. Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler underwrote a highly similar course of action with their claim that Mendelian genetics had shown how one could detect, isolate, and extinguish "inferior racial strains" and thereby allow the "supremacy of Germanic blood to predominate." Needless to say, this startlingly optimistic outlook stood in marked contrast with the more familiar eugenicist view that miscegenation automatically led to infertility and biological decline – which sheds light on why the programs of controlled breeding advocated by so many German scientists in the 1920s and 1930s focused less on keeping bloodlines untainted than on identifying and fostering the transmission of the "best racial elements."[42] In the coming years, this is exactly what the race experts of the RuSHA would try to do on a grand scale all across the continent.

While their remit was pan-European, however, one major group remained off limits. Although Hitler and Himmler believed that "Nordic blood-shares" could offset the inheritance of a "substandard lineage," this assumption did not apply to Jews, the "anti-race" (*Gegenrasse*), whose biological substance was said to inflict an invariably degenerative effect on the racial makeup of other peoples. In a manner redolent of the so-called one-drop rule – the underlying theory of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, which stated that anyone with a single African ancestor in their pedigree was black – the National Socialists ironically conceived of "Jewish blood" as being more powerful than "German blood."[43] Hence,

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[40] Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 2001), 866-867; Warwick Anderson, "Racial Hybridity, Physical Anthropology, and Human Biology in the Colonial Laboratories of the United States," *Current Anthropology 53* (April 2012): 95-107. Also see Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, 225-228.

[41] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), 401. Also see Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 56.

[42] Annegret Ehmann, "From Colonial Racism to Nazi Population Policy: The Role of the So-called Mischlinge," in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, and the Reexamined*, eds. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 118. Also see Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), 401.

[43] John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 17. On the "one-drop rule," see Floyd James Davis, *Who Is Black? One Nations' Definition* (University Park, PA: Penn

the Eignungsprüfer were technically not even supposed to screen Jews, and when they did happen to come across someone with a "Jewish look" in the annexed Polish provinces, they usually recommended that he or she be confined to the ghettoes, even if available documentation did not reveal any Jewish forebears.[44] Not all Nazi leaders fully agreed with this exclusionary standpoint. Wilhelm Stuckart for one opposed the expulsion of "half-Jews" from the Reich because he saw it as equivalent to "abandoning that part of their blood which is German." In his view, it was "extremely dangerous to supply the enemy with German blood," for the "high intelligence and educational level [of such people], when combined with their German heredity, would still make them born leaders and terrible adversaries."[45]

All of this goes to show just how diverse, contradictory, and multivalent racial discourses in Germany actually were during the years that preceded the Second World War, when official formulations underwent constant change due to the competing and usually incoherent opinions of politicians, jurists, academics, propagandists, and ordinary citizens. Although a general consensus prevailed within the National Socialist regime on the issue of German racial heterogeneity, few could agree on the nature of race itself, let alone on how to apply it as an implement of social policy. While some promoted racial hygiene or looked to the theories of contemporary anthropology and psychology, others embraced the spiritual vagaries of Nordic spirituality or indulged in a visceral form of racism that eschewed scientific legitimacy altogether. While these dispositions often overlapped, they were just as likely to be at odds with each other. Popular opinion also had to be accounted for, and as one historian puts it, "Every German had his [or her] own ideas of race."[46] This is an overstatement, of course, but the point is well taken. The multiplicity of race as an ontological phenomenon confounded the definition of Germanness inside the Reich throughout the 1930s, and it would continue to perplex the National Socialists once the war afforded them an opportunity to project their fantasies of racial consolidation outward.

In this respect, the first major assignment of the RuSHA race examiners during the months that followed the conquest of Poland was the classification of incoming ethnic German Umsiedler. Despite the laudatory image disseminated to the public in Nazi propaganda, these people were not just viewed as long-lost "blood brothers"; so long as their "racial heritage" and "ethnic-political background" remained unconfirmed, they were also a potential threat. It thus fell to SD chief Reinhard Heydrich to create a Central Immigration Office (*Einwandererzentralstelle*, EWZ) on October 10, 1939, intended to categorize the resettlers and oversee their subsequent naturalization – a process the Nazis referred to as

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State University Press, 2001); Ian F. Haney-López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996). Also see Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference," 882.

[44] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/17: Schwalm, "Vermerk betr. Arisch-Jüdischer Mischehen und Judenverdächtiger," June 15, 1941.

[45] Mark Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution: A Reconsideration* (New York: Picador, 2002), 143-148.

[46] Cornelia Essner, "Im 'Irrgarten der Rasselogik' oder nordische Rassenlehre und nationale Frage, 1919-1935," *Historische Mitteilungen* 7 (1994), 101-102; Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide*, 5-6, 105-106, 109, 272.

Durchschleusung, or filtration.[47] The EWZ was a composite entity made up of representatives from a handful of different departments, a microcosm of the polycratic political structure of the Third Reich. The Eignungsprüfer constituted one of the most important personnel groupings, but they had to collaborate with the SD, the Interior Ministry, the Reich Labor Ministry, and the Ethnic German Liaison Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, VoMi) – the latter of which handled the actual resettlement of ethnic Germans from Soviet-held zones in Eastern Europe and oversaw their accommodation and welfare afterwards. Although the leaders of EWZ teams were nearly always SD men, and hence subordinate to Heydrich via Ehlich, members of each separate section reported back to their own superiors as well. A component of Himmler's Reich Commission for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity, the EWZ also had close institutional links with Ulrich Greifelt at the RKF Staff Main Office in Berlin.[48] This administrative set-up reflected the permeability that typified the Nazi state apparatus, with officials moving from one post to another and often occupying several at the same time – an organizational framework that enabled interagency cooperation yet also led to all kinds of infighting.[49]

Although headquartered in Berlin with branch offices in Łódź and Poznań, nearly all of the examinations conducted by the EWZ were carried out by mobile "flying commissions" that evaluated ethnic German resettlers in the numerous holding camps of the VoMi. No matter where it took place, the screening procedure followed the same multipart sequence consisting of five separate sections. First came the registry station, where SD personnel photographed the Umsiedler and recorded their biographical data before handing them over to the health station, where physicians from the Interior Ministry and the SS Medical Corps performed a basic health inspection to check for infectious diseases, employing a full repertoire of diagnostic equipment and assisted all the while by German medical students, state social workers, and Red Cross nurses.[50] They then appraised the candidate's hereditary health with the intention of weeding out those whose "biological defects" or "asocial tendencies" might endanger the colonization of the eastern territories. "In order to build a wall of the best German blood in the East that can forever defy foreign onslaughts," one compendium of guidelines declared, "only racially valuable and congenitally healthy families may be deployed here… Settlement in the East cannot ever be approved if

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[47] Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 98-99. Interestingly, Hitler had outlined this type of evaluation in broad strokes in *Mein Kampf*, where he predicted that in the future "specially formed race commissions must issue settlement certificates; however, this is tied to the definitive establishment of racial purity. It will thus become possible to found border colonies [in the East] whose inhabitants are exclusively bearers of the highest racial suitability"; see Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), 405.

[48] Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit und Umsiedlungspolitik 1939-1945. Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Auslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006), 160.

[49] Isabel Heinemann, "Ethnic Resettlement and Inter-Agency Cooperation in the Occupied Eastern Territories," in *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business, and the Organization of the Holocaust*, eds. Gerald D. Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 229.

[50] BA R 186/1: Meixner, "Dienstanweisung der EWZ Gesundheitsstellen," undated. Also see Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 100-107. Initially a Property Station came next, where resettlers registered belongings they had left behind in the hope of future compensation, but Göring's economic empire soon took over this responsibility.

hereditary diseases are present."[51] To accord with the Law for the Prevention of Congenitally Ill Offspring (1933), EWZ doctors were expected not only to be well-versed in the formulae of Mendelian genetics (polymerism, alleles, pairing), but to report all "congenitally ill" subjects for sterilization.[52]

What is perhaps most noteworthy about this protocol is the manner in which it linked "biological value" to typically bourgeois behavioral norms – what the Nazis referred to collectively as *Lebensbewährung*, or social worth. In this sense, EWZ doctors clearly invoked the paradigmatic assumptions of contemporary German medical practices while adhering to conventions systematized by the so-called Hereditary Health Courts that adjudicated sterilization decisions in the Reich.[53] They investigated not only a person's pedigree, but his or her moral character, reputation, and economic standing, not to mention signs of productivity – professional accomplishments, work ethic, technical skills – which were especially appealing given the need for industrious pioneers to discharge the practical needs of hard-scrabble frontier outposts.[54] As Andreas Strippel has observed, "the conception of social worth as a genetic constant makes clear the projection of social conditions onto putatively biological certainties. In a mixture of eugenic racism and practical necessity, there developed an attitude in which pragmatism (rationality) and the fantasy of a racially pure society (ideology) became so closely related to each other that they were inseparable."[55] The Nazis wanted to ensure that future colonial settlements contained "only those families who can contribute and are in a position to stand on their own feet economically." EWZ doctors therefore received instructions to reject families "in which the patriarch or another important bread-winner is impaired in his capability to work as a consequence of a present or potential physical or psychological ailment," as well as adults who had "sought permanent support for themselves or their children from outside means" or "neither maintained an orderly household nor endeavored to raise their children to be useful Germans." There was an even more concerted effort to debar groups of people traditionally scorned as the dregs of society, whether that meant "families whose members have engaged in repeated violations of criminal law," individuals deemed "work-shy, unscrupulous, and unproductive," or "alcoholics, prostitutes, vagrants, drug addicts, gamblers, and so

[51] BA R 69/178/26-29: Meixner, "Richtlinien für die ärztliche und erbbiologische Beurteilung der Umsiedler," January 6, 1941.

[52] BA R 186/1: Meixner, "Dienstanweisung der EWZ Gesundheitsstellen," undated. The evidence suggests that the Nazis did often follow through on this intention, though the actual number of ethnic Germans they sterilized remains unknown. In addition, some of these people may have been victims of the T4 euthanasia program; see Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 196-197; Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 179. Also see Maria Fiebrandt, *Auslese für die Siedlergesellschaft. Die Einbeziehung Volksdeutscher in die NS-Erbgesundheitspolitik im Kontext der Umsiedlungen 1939-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

[53] BA R 186/1: Meixner, "Dienstanweisung der EWZ Gesundheitsstellen," undated; Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 175, 178.

[54] Stiller, "On the Margins of the Volksgemeinschaft," 246.

[55] Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 106.

forth."[56] In each respect, the EWZ physicians left no doubt that they had internalized long-standing conservative prejudices that associated poverty with inborn deficiencies.

After passing through the health station, the Umsiedler moved on to the next phase of the "filtration" process: a racial examination conducted by the Eignungsprüfer of the RuSHA. It is crucial to note from the outset that these men did not concern themselves with *völkisch* definitions of Germanness. "Ethnicity has no influence on the racial evaluation," one of them wrote, "the race examiner must simply determine the racial belonging of the subject and assign a corresponding grade. Only with borderline cases is political behavior to be considered."[57] On the other hand, they did not focus primarily on eugenic criteria either, choosing instead to quantify race first and foremost via an anthropological schema organized around twenty-one anatomical features.[58] Given their obvious inability to formulate a "pigmentocracy" anchored in gradations of skin color alone, the Eignungsprüfer intuitively surmised that a comprehensive codification of the human body was the only way to expose biological differences between and within European nations.[59] With this theoretical position in mind, they began their routine by taking a series of measurements and comparing them to scientific diagrams of an ideal "Nordic appearance" – elongated, narrow head, oval-shaped face, blond hair, blue eyes, pinkish-white skin, "well-developed and sinewy musculature," and a "taller, slimmer body with thin, long limbs."[60] They then combined their findings to come up with a "racial score," from "a" for "pure Nordic" through an array of "mixed types" down to "e" for "alien-blooded persons and mixed-breeds with non-European shares."[61] In deference to Himmler's wishes, even the most trivial aspects of a person's physicality could impact the outcome of these deliberations. In one communiqué, the Reichsführer-SS informed his underlings that he placed "the greatest value on whether cheekbones are pronounced and whether body hair is thick."[62] During a visit to the EWZ branch office in Poznań in mid-December 1939, he spelled out his preferences in more evocative terms: "Racial examinations must prohibit the development of Mongolian types in the newly colonized East. I want to create a blond province here."[63] Regardless of whether someone possessed the ideal phenotype, however, racial hygiene was just as important to the race examiners as it was to the doctors employed in the EWZ health stations. As one leading functionary at the RuSHA Race Office explained, "A person who is declared physically superior can receive an overall judgment

[56] BA R 69/178/26-29: Meixner, "Richtlinien für die ärztliche und erbbiologische Beurteilung der Umsiedler," January 6, 1941.

[57] BA R 69/598/14-15: Kaaserer to EWZ Eignungsprüfer, October 28, 1940.

[58] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 234-235.

[59] On the notion of a "pigmentocracy," see Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America*, 43, 57-59.

[60] BA NS 2/161/1-4: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Rassenbestimmung," undated. These standards were taken almost verbatim from Hans F.K. Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (Munich: Lehmann, 1929), 21-25.

[61] BA NS 2/161/1-4: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Rassenbestimmung," undated. Also see a subsequent and slightly modified version of these guidelines in BA NS 47/38: Schultz to Vietz, July 21, 1943.

[62] BA R 69/475/43: Tschiersky to EWZ Kommissionen, July 14, 1940.

[63] BA NS 2/60/16: Künzel to Tschierschky, December 12, 1939.

warranting rejection if psychological, behavioral, or congenital defects are present." For this reason, his colleagues supplemented biometric data with a "personality test" that sorted people according to various marks of "genetic fitness." ("A I: very suitable" to "A III: generally suitable") or lack thereof ("B I: no longer suitable" to "B II: "unsuitable" and "C: ethnically or biologically unsuitable").[64]

Upon finishing their assessments, the Eignungsprüfer collated these different figures to get a composite "race formula" – a number for physical appearance, a lower-case letter for the predominant "blood quotients" (*Blutsanteile*) and an upper-case letter and Roman numeral for the hereditary diagnosis – which they entered onto so-called *R-Karte*, or race cards, each undersigned and stamped by the presiding inspector.[65] So, for example, 7 a A I signified a "pure Nordic, especially suitable" person with a "very robust physique," whereas 4 c/d B I indicated a "sufficient physique, with balanced mixtures of Dinaric, Western, Eastern, and East-Baltic racial components, still suitable."[66] With these results in tow, the examiners then computed the "cumulative worth" of a family unit by weighing the characteristics of its individual members and subsequently assigned them to one of four "value groups." RuS-I encompassed "pure Nordic persons who are superlative in terms of racial health and performance capability," while RuS-II comprised "predominantly Nordic or Falian persons" with "minor mixtures of other European races" who "are acceptable in terms of racial health and performance." RuS-III designated "below average" or "tolerable" individuals with "less balanced mixtures of heavy Dinaric or Western components," as well as "mixed-breeds with Eastern or East Baltic elements." RuS-IV, the lowest rung, denoted a "fully unsuitable and unbearable addition to the population," including "pure or predominantly Eastern or East-Baltic persons," "unharmonious mixtures of the European races," and "congenitally ill persons," as well as all "racial aliens" (Jews, Gypsies, and non-whites), though a further subdivision (IVf) was later added for them. This typology makes it quite clear that the praxis of the inspectors fundamentally hinged not on a model of racial purity, but rather on a graduated rubric of compounds, on whether the examinee displayed a "well-balanced" or "unbalanced" blend of "European race-types."[67]

Neither the Eignungsprüfer nor the doctors decided whether a given person should acquire German citizenship, however. That job, naturally enough, was entrusted to the citizenship stations, where specially appointed deputies from the Interior Ministry and the VoMi worked alongside SD operatives to verify the subject's ancestral lineage and determine their "ethnic-political reliability." In many ways, this procedure dovetailed quite neatly with the parameters of the Deutsche Volksliste. For one thing, EWZ personnel had to rely heavily on ostensible proof of "cultural affiliations to Germandom" – language,

[64] BA NS 2/161/1-4: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Rassenbestimmung," undated.

[65] BA R 69/598/14-15: Kaaserer to EWZ Eignungsprüfer, October 28, 1940. Sometimes these cards contained hand-written descriptions of "congenital defects" and specific types of "alien blood."

[66] BA NS 47/38: Schultz to Vietz, July 21, 1943. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 235-236.

[67] BA R 69/178/1: "Die Gesichtspunkte bei der Einstufung in die vier rassischen Wertungsgruppen bei der EWZ," unsigned, undated. For a good overview of this four-tier system, see Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 191.

religious confession, and school attendance, for example – because documentation of German descent was often unavailable or inconclusive.[68] For another, they went to great lengths to learn as much as they could about the resettlers' prior involvement in the "ethnic struggle," and those who stood accused of having joined "foreign national movements" or spoken out against the Nazis were downgraded and branded as "renegades."[69] Yet what sticks out most conspicuously about these inquiries is that investigators routinely deferred to the information disclosed by the Volksdeutsche themselves. Each EWZ team engaged the services of so-called ethnicity advisers (*Volkstumssachverständiger*), usually prominent Nazi sympathizers recruited from among the ethnic German communities to provide an insider's view on their cultural and political leanings. On the basis of personal knowledge, these men corroborated the statements of their neighbors, and if they did not stem from the same group, they got their answers from witnesses who did. Most significantly, the ethnicity advisers could tender or withhold endorsements for naturalization, which gave them a considerable deal of power.[70]

The Nazi regime liked to present the German public with an overwhelmingly favorable depiction of the Umsiedler while maintaining that their integration into the *Volksgemeinschaft* transpired smoothly and without incident. A newspaper article on the activities of one EWZ commission described the classification sequence as follows:

> In the waiting room, the respective particulars are taken down and the results of the hereditary health questions are registered by a medical student… The families undress in separate changing rooms, something entirely unfamiliar for these people, who on average are so healthy that they have never had to visit a doctor… The physician and the race examiner investigate each family in succession, so that they can provide a reliable overall evaluation. All results are recorded on cards, which are labeled with various colors… If the evaluation turns out positive in terms of health, ethnicity, and race, the provisional allocation of a farm takes place according to the guidelines of the SS Settlement Staff. This is the case with nearly all ethnic German families.[71]

In reality, the process suffered from a whole host of embarrassing flaws and setbacks. On a purely logistical level, the requisite paperwork was often improperly filled out or contained errors and false testimony that did not match up with other pertinent evidence.[72] In a similar vein, the photographs taken at the registry office frequently came out blurry, thus restricting the ability of the Eignungsprüfer to detect "alien blood elements" (or so they claimed).[73] Given the chaos that accompanied the resettlement actions and the insistence on screening entire families together, the separation of relatives caused further delays. On one occasion, only 2,923 out of 7,898 subjects went through all the stations as part of an intact household; the remaining 4,975 had to appear before the assessors again once their kin finally arrived,

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[68] Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 118-119, 123.
[69] Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 163-164.
[70] Strippel, "Race, Regional Identity, and Volksgemeinschaft," 187-189, 191.
[71] Quoted from Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 239.
[72] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/25: Himmler to Heydrich and Hofmann, June 19, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/1/18-14: Tschierschky, "Auszüge aus den Erfahrungsberichten der Dienststellen der EWZ Kommission II," February 24, 1940.
[73] BA R 69/599/159: Amberger, "Bericht der RuS-Dienststelle in EWZ Kommission VII," December 21, 1940.

making the first round of inspections almost pointless. Above all, though the Nazi regime devoted extensive human and material resources to the *Heim ins Reich* initiative, the EWZ commissions were simply unable to cope with such a massive volume of people in a timely fashion due to recurrent personnel shortages. They did not have enough trained race examiners or translators – a necessity since many Umsiedler spoke incomprehensible German dialects, if they spoke German at all – and the preliminary work proved to be far too strenuous for a few assistants to manage on their own.[74]

Then there was the all-important matter of furnishing adequate numbers of colonists to build a "wall of settlement" in the annexed Polish provinces. After discovering in the spring of 1940 that EWZ physicians had excluded an inordinate amount of resettlers for "biological reasons," the leader of the health stations, Dr. Hanns Meixner, stepped in to soften their hardline approach. He pointed out that symptoms of "feeble-mindedness" could not always be attributed to a genetic origin and reminded subordinates that the hereditary defects of a single individual did not automatically taint his or her relatives: "From now on, therefore, we will only label a family congenitally ill if this is the case with two or more of its members."[75] Doctors in the field, however, had their own opinions. One of them demanded an even more rigid framework than before, lest the incorporated eastern territories be overrun with families who "in one or two generations would produce a sty of idiots, retards, epileptics, and schizophrenics."[76] The Eignungsprüfer of the RuSHA also ran into unforeseen complications. They found it difficult to balance positive and negative traits against each other, especially when their assessments revealed starkly divergent ratings within the same family or when they encountered unknown "racial strains " that seemed to defy analysis altogether. [77] When in doubt, the race examiners erred on the side of caution, and just like the EWZ doctors, they rejected people at a rate their superiors deemed gratuitous. An obsession with biological purity, in other words, undercut the objective of racial consolidation.

Faced with these troubling circumstances, the SS leadership switched gears and instituted several major policy amendments in early 1940. Up until then, only those resettlers who had a clean bill of hereditary health and obtained the grade RuS-I or II were eligible to receive farmsteads in western Poland, whereas those diagnosed with congenital illnesses or placed in category RuS-III ended up in Germany itself, as did anyone the SD regarded as a potential "ethnic-political threat" in need of "re-education."[78] The logic behind this rather ironic choice for an alternate depository was largely economic in nature (the EWZ operated a special labor allocation department to insert all Umsiedler into the

[74] BA R 69/35/1-2: "Schlussbericht über die Durchschleusung in Kosten," sig. illegible, March 31, 1940.
[75] BA R 69/178/8: Meixner to EWZ Gesundheitsstellen, June 20, 1940.
[76] Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 180.
[77] BA R 69/45/1-2: "Bericht der RuS-Diensstelle bei der Kommission III," sig. illegible, August 30, 1940; BA NS 2/161/1-4: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Rassenbestimmung," undated.
[78] Andreas Strippel, "Race, Regional Identity, and Volksgemeinschaft: Naturalization of Ethnic German Resettlers in the Second World War by the Einwandererzentralstelle/Central Immigration Office of the SS," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire*, eds. Szejnmann and Umbach, 189-191.

workforce irrespective of their final destination). As one Eignungsprüfer explained, "The shortage of labor forces [in the Reich] does not permit an expulsion of these racially unsuitable people to the east," though "returning" them to the German interior did have the additional upshot of "achieving a rapid alignment [*Angleichung*] of their inner mentality with the temperament of the entire nation."[79] People declared to be "alien-blooded" (RuS-IV) or stricken with "extreme hereditary afflictions," on the other hand, *were* usually deported, either to the General Government or back to the country from which they originally came.[80] In January 1940, however, Himmler ordered EWZ chief Martin Sandberger to reorganize this system. Henceforth, subjects in value group RuS-III could also be retained for settlement in the incorporated eastern territories, while those categorized as RuS-IV would now replace them as laborers on the home front.[81] Ever reluctant to water down their standards, the race examiners furtively sought to circumvent these modifications with some clever spin: "The decision of the Reichsführer-SS to allow members of value group III into the Warthegau," wrote one Race Office employee, "means that in the future racial evaluations must be much stricter."[82] It was also around this time that they added the designation RuS-IVf to isolate "racial aliens," whom the SS continued to ship eastward and sometimes condemned to a fate far worse.[83] Whenever the Eignungsprüfer stumbled across ethnic Germans who possessed "strong non-European blood-shares" or had "such a demonstrably alien appearance that they pose a risk to the racial uniformity of the German people," they elected to treat them as equivalent to "full Jews" or "Gypsies" and intern them in the Łódź ghetto.[84]

Still, this seems to have been a rare occurrence. No matter how much the examiners griped about it, the EWZ clearly embraced a more lenient posture in the spring of 1940, conditioned just as much by the unintelligibility of race as it was by the Nazis' colonial ambitions. In the event that a grade of RuS-IV or the supposed presence of congenital illnesses prevented someone from staying in western Poland, these judgments could be nullified if the ethnicity advisers vouched for the loyalty of the person in question or felt that removing them would have an adverse effect on their community. The commissioners also kept their options open with borderline cases by denying them citizenship for the time being yet issuing a "referral notice" that obliged them to reapply for naturalization after they had "proven themselves" through a year-long stint in the Reich.[85] In an even more astounding reversal, the director of the EWZ in Poznań eventually decreed that families with "racially alien blood-quotients (Jewish, Mongolian, Negro,

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[79] BA NS 2/60/16: Künzel to Tschierschky, December 12, 1939; Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Hauptstaatsarchiv Hannover (=NLH) Nds. 120 Hildesheim, Acc. 132/90 Nr. 202: Das Schwarze Korps, "Deutschblütige werden erfasst. Die Rückführung der deutschstämmigen Menschen aus dem Generalgouvernement," unsigned, undated.

[80] Koehl, *RKFDV*, 107; Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 191.

[81] BA R 69/178/3: Tschierschky to Heydrich, January 17, 1940.

[82] BA R 69/178/6: "Aktenvermerk betr. Rassewertgruppe III," sig. illegible, February 3, 1940.

[83] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 236.

[84] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/17: Schwalm, "Vermerk betr. arisch-jüdischer Mischehen und Judenverdächtiger," June 15, 1941.

[85] Strippel, "Race, Regional Identity, and Volksgemeinschaft," 189, 191-193.

etc.)" would still qualify for enfranchisement insofar as they could demonstrate German ancestry and present witnesses to confirm that "they were generally counted among the Volksdeutsche in their old homeland."[86] Yet the frequency with which EWZ officials resorted to these exceptions and special dispensations destabilized the system as a whole and left an indelible awareness that defining Germanness in terms of race was not a clear-cut proposition in the slightest.

By changing the rules, moreover, Himmler had set a dangerous precedent. The race examiners could now rescind earlier verdicts, which opened the door to endless second-guessing and supplementary examinations.[87] The Reichsführer-SS contributed to this uncertainty by throwing their legitimacy into jeopardy through his habitual intervention, since he fancied himself the race examiner par excellence and always reserved the right to sit as the supreme judge of "racial belonging."[88] After scanning through pictures of one woman with alleged Nordic forebears, he remarked that "her facial features are typically Slavic" and caustically quipped that the responsible inspector should "take a course in racial theory." In response to the classification of another female subject as an "uneven cross-breed," he proclaimed, "this girl is 1.68 meters tall, which in a woman definitely indicates Nordic blood. The skin is pinkish-white, which is not strong evidence of Western, East-Baltic, or Dinaric origin." This sort of compulsive interference rained down on EWZ physicians too. In February 1940, Himmler castigated one of them for "an absolutely provincial point of view," for it was "incomprehensible that a woman aged 30, 1.74 meters tall, weighing 64 kilos, with pinkish-white skin, grey eyes, and straight light blond hair… would make a very mediocre impression on the doctor," who was obviously "a philistine from Insterburg."[89] As we will see in Chapter Four, it was no coincidence that Himmler took the greatest interest in female subjects.

Without question, however, the most intractable conundrum that plagued the EWZ lay in the heated conflicts that erupted between its various component offices over the meaning and relative salience of race and *Volk*. In theory, each section was supposed to come up with an independent verdict, which, when combined, generated an overall ruling on naturalization and settlement. In practice, it was often impossible to reach a uniform conclusion since "every department considered itself the most important player and criticized the work of other departments."[90] The RuS-Führer at the EWZ branch in Łódź, Richard Kaaserer, insisted that "The racial evaluation cannot be altered by any agency. It is an expert opinion as well as a medical one. The work of the race examiners is the most consequential activity of Central Emigration Office because it alone has a determining influence on the future placement of the resettlers."[91] Physicians assigned to the health stations did not take kindly to such arrogance, nor did they

[86] BA R 69/602/65: Schapmeier, "Anordnung Nr. 152," undated.
[87] BA R 69/178/6: "Aktenvermerk betr. Rassewertgruppe III," sig. illegible, February 3, 1940.
[88] BA R 69/475/59-60: EWZ Kommission III to Tschierschky, July 15, 1940; Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 191-192.
[89] Quoted from Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 362-363.
[90] Strippel, "Race, Regional Identity, and Volksgemeinschaft," 192.
[91] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 237.

have any intention of playing second fiddle. Soon enough, disputes raged between the two camps, and they almost always mirrored discrepancies that set eugenic and anthropological racism apart: whereas the doctors put all the weight on hereditary factors, the latter gave precedence to "racial phenotype." Although they shared a loose consensus that only people of "German or kindred blood" possessed the requisite biological "fitness," their parallel attempts to substantiate this assumption triggered an enormous amount of squabbling. One Eignungsprüfer even mocked a EWZ doctor to his face by asking rhetorically, "What good are eugenically healthy Japanese to us?" Because he and his associates likewise saw themselves as experts in the field of racial hygiene, they repeatedly infringed on their colleagues' turf and challenged their competence.[92] These quarrels grew so bitter that superiors had to intercede and create a separate RuSHA bureau for each EWZ commission in December 1939 (before the race inspectors had performed their tasks within the health stations), but that did little to break the deadlock since neither side could overrule the other when it came to the issue of where a given resettler should be deployed.[93]

The only thing that the Eignungsprüfer and the physicians could consistently unite around was their mutual opposition to the authority vested in the citizenship stations, which could not revoke their decisions, yet were not bound by them either (unless it concerned "racial aliens" (RuS-IVf) or subjects thought to be "seriously debilitated by congenital illness"). Beyond that though, race did not necessarily exercise a dominant influence over naturalization. Time and again, officials from the SD and the VoMi cited ethnic-political justifications to snub individuals classified as RuS-I or II, and sometimes they approved "German-blooded" candidates whom the race examiners or the doctors wanted to discard (so long as they had authenticated their allegiance to National Socialism, that is).[94] SS security functionaries acerbically ridiculed the Eignungsprüfer and their dubious anthropological conventions to boot. During a meeting of agency heads in December 1940, SD officer Karl Tschierschky belittled the RuSHA in no uncertain terms by telling Kaaserer that he "had been active for two and a half years in the Race and Settlement Main Office" and could therefore appreciate "what kind of headache this is: many people of below-average intelligence." He went on to make fun of Kaaserer for hiring a chauffeur who was "a III-case, abnormally bloated by overactive glands," then lampooned the findings of his subordinates as well: "It is noteworthy that only with the commission of SS-Sturmbannführer Herold is there so much alien blood. Other commissions have far less alien blood. Hopefully it does not turn out after a later examination that only 10 percent of the alien-blooded are actually alien-blooded."[95] On another front, the ethnicity advisers lodged vociferous protests whenever the race inspectors rebuffed families who had supplied sufficient *völkisch* credentials. The Eignungsprüfer fired back by accusing these men of

[92] Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 224.
[93] Ibid., 209. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 196-197.
[94] BA R 186/1/130-131: "Nachtrag zur Dienstanweisung für die Staatsangehörigkeitsstellen," unsigned, June 26, 1940.
[95] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/25-26: Amberger, "Schreiben betr. Aussagen des SS-Stbf. Tschierschky," December 16, 1940.

favoritism, panning their methods as superficial and imprecise, and stipulating that "persons of alien blood are an intolerable burden for the German body politic, regardless of whether they have achieved greater individual accomplishments on behalf of the nation."[96] The ethnicity advisers did not openly contest the validity of eugenic or racial-anthropological criteria. But they did balk at the notion that these criteria ought to supersede genealogy and cultural heritage, and they too speculated that Umsiedler whom the RuSHA categorized as RuS-IV or IVf did not really harbor any "alien blood." For their part, the resettlers themselves also filed complaints about the rulings of the Eignungsprüfer – often with the support of their VoMi handlers – which stoked outrage not just because they devalued and shamed otherwise proud Germans, but because they allowed for the inclusion of individuals whose ethnic background was spotty at best.[97] But even if the Nazis had been able to translate race into reality in a manner that pleased their constituents, the main cause behind these fierce debates, as one can clearly see, was the fact there were simply too many cooks in the kitchen.

Most Umsiedler had good reason to feel disgruntled. Within the RuSHA stations in particular, though also throughout the EWZ as a whole, it was hard for the Nazis to shake the impression that their supposed "blood brothers" failed to measure up to the ideal image of "racially valuable" pioneers. They typically viewed these people through the lens of earlier perceptions of Auslandsdeutsche in Eastern Europe, as "suspiciously similar to their Slavic neighbors" and "sometimes indistinguishable from them."[98] Most resettlers did not seem to embody the persona of "culture-bearers" at all, and they often provoked stereotypes of backwardness and unruliness more commonly associated with non-European colonial natives. "In their thinking as well as their behavior," wrote one official, "they are extraordinarily primitive… indeed, they are like big children."[99] To be sure, the race examiners certainly did not paint a completely negative picture. The Eignungsprüfer in EWZ Commission VI observed that the Galician Germans had an excellent attitude, a "well-balanced racial phenotype" and a "healthy hereditary constitution," adding that "there were no cases of mixing with ethnic aliens" and commending them for having maintained their "original Schwabian and Pfälz dialects."[100] Another race examiner also praised most of the Volksdeutsche from eastern Poland whom he screened, and in doing so divulged a mindset suffused with agrarian, anti-modern sentiments. According to him, ethnic Germans from the countryside had shunned interbreeding with "ethnic aliens" and therefore "still carried on the customs and traditions of their ancestors." Their attitude and behavior, in his eyes, was "perfect in every way." But among the city-dwellers, he noted, "Eastern and East-Baltic elements" were highly conspicuous and almost none of

[96] BA R 69/599/159: Amberger, "Bericht der RuS-Dienststelle in EWZ Kommission VII," December 21, 1940.
[97] Ibid. Also see BA R 69/475/2: Kulzer to Ohlendorf, January 23, 1940.
[98] Doris L. Bergen, "Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability: Women Outsiders in German-Occupied Europe," in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 274.
[99] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 245.
[100] BA R 69/35/1-2: "Schlussbericht über die Durchschleusung in Kosten," sig. illegible, March 31, 1940.

the children spoke German – circumstances he credited to "heavy mingling with the Polish and Ukrainian population." Whereas the urbanites preferred to "go on living together with the Poles," the rural folk "long for the day when they can be removed from the Polish filth."[101]

Most reports told an even more disquieting story. During his time "sifting" resettlers from northern Bukovina, Ludwig Amberger uncovered an alarming number of ethnic Germans who "belonged primarily to the Mongolian, Inner Asiatic, Oriental, Malayan, and Outer Asiatic races."[102] In a summary dated February 20, 1940, the Eignungsprüfer stationed with Commission I described the Latvian Germans he evaluated in Kolberg as "probably the worst material the commission has yet encountered." None of the families received the grade RuS-I, and even those deemed RuS-II were "far closer to the border with III than to I." After consulting with local townspeople, the author confided that "the opinion of the Kolberger population on the everyday behavior of the Baltic Germans… likewise confirms the negative results of the examinations."[103] EWZ statistics show that other Eignungsprüfer looked upon their subjects in similar terms. The numbers almost speak for themselves. Although 60 to 70 percent of the 10,954 "repatriates" from Estonia and the 38,002 from Latvia were RuS-I or II, the figure was just over 45,500 or 44 percent with their counterparts from Volhynia and Galicia, and the vast majority from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dobrudja fell into RuS-III. The Race Office in Berlin complained that between 40 and 60 percent of the latter three communities should have been relegated to class RuS-IV, admitting that "if stricter criteria had been applied, then the proportion of the families in this category would have been considerably larger. It was only due to repeated and urgent requests by senior officials that many families on the borderline were categorized as RuS-III."[104] Despite the overblown bravado of the Eignungsprüfer, it had increasingly become apparent that their much-vaunted praxis of racial classification was far from objectively ironclad. But that was only one symptom of a larger dilemma (albeit a big one). Rather than affirming the superiority of the German *Volk*, the EWZ constructed an intranational hierarchy stratified along several divergent axes, each of which subverted the aim of racial reclamation by making it increasingly difficult to pinpoint where the line between German and non-German actually stood.

Nothing spotlights the immediate repercussions of this unnerving state of affairs better than looking at how the Nazis resolved to deal with resettlers who straddled traditional ethnic boundaries or had no discernible German cultural roots whatsoever. Desperate to escape the Soviets, many of the latter had pretended to be Volksdeutsche in order to gain a seat on one of the VoMi transports heading west, though Stalin's agents also sometimes took advantage of the *Heim ins Reich* initiative to dispense with unwanted inhabitants of recently acquired territories by passing them off as Germans. At first, SD

[101] BA R 69/553/5-6: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. VIII to Künzel, September 9, 1940.
[102] BA R 69/599/159: Amberger, "Bericht der RuS-Dienststelle in EWZ Kommission VII," December 21, 1940.
[103] BA R 69/502/4-5: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. I to Tschierschky, March 9, 1940.
[104] The first two sets of figures can be found in Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 244. For the third tabulation and the quote, see Longerich, *Himmler*, 448.

operatives called upon the VoMi to remove "anyone belonging to a foreign ethnic group" from its assembly camps and may have deported some of these people back to the Soviet Union (one can only imagine what happened to them afterwards if so).[105] Before long, however, the myth of "lost German blood" surfaced as the conceptual template for grasping ethnographic complexity and stimulated a reorientation of policy in this domain as well. During a visit to Łódź on January 13, 1940, Himmler announced his intention "to naturalize racially valuable ethnic aliens in large numbers" and ordered that "if they belong to race value groups I and II, the EWZ may not independently reject the naturalization of ethnically alien resettlers such as Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, etc. with the justification that they are not of German descent or cannot speak German."[106]

Eager to please their master with fresh prospects, Himmler's underlings moved quickly to advance this new priority, which rather explicitly elevated racial principles above standards of ethnic-political reliability. At the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin, Hans Ehlich informed Tschierschky in February 1940 that there were "numerous Poles among the repatriates in the observation camps" and asked him to start sorting through them because "camp leaders and other informants cannot always determine whether these alleged Poles are in reality ethnic Germans who no longer speak the German language."[107] The following month, during the registration of Volksdeutsche in Volhynia, Galicia, and the Narew region, the VoMi discovered around 4,500 so-called Hauländer, whose ancestors had purportedly migrated from northern Germany to Danzig in the early sixteenth century and from there spread as far as Polessia over the course of subsequent centuries. Although the Hauländer had been "linguistically Polonized," one observed commented, they nevertheless "remain German by blood and free from elements of alien blood." That same March, the EWZ identified an additional 5,400 Poles and Ukrainians as well as at least four thousand more "for whom membership in a foreign nation has not been clearly determined, yet who also cannot provide evidence of German ethnicity."[108] In late May 1940, having learned that a sizeable number of "Poles and other ethnic aliens" were arriving at VoMi transit camps in the General Government, RuSHA chief Otto Hofmann likewise instructed his men to "register families in these camps who appear suitable for the Old Reich in the sense of the selection work with evacuated Polish families."[109] As far as we can tell, none of the people from these various groups ever entered the Re-Germanization Procedure. Although the SS did contemplate enrolling those who stemmed from "intelligentsia professions" (with the alternative being to leave them in the General Government), the majority wound up at VoMi sites in the Reich alongside other Umsiedler (at least insofar as the RuSHA

[105] USHMMA 15.015M/182/1: Barth to Rapp, February 5, 1940; BA R 69/824/1-2: "Zulassungsbedingungen zur Durchschleusung in Litauen," unsigned, undated.

[106] BA R 69/475/4: Tschierschky to Ehlich, February 24, 1940.

[107] BA R 69/475/8-9: Ehlich to Tschierschky, February 27, 1940.

[108] BA R 69/475/17-18: Malsen, "Bericht über Fremdstämmigen und besonderen Volkstumsgruppen der Umsiedler aus Ostpolen," March 11, 1940.

[109] BA NS 2/61/23: Hofmann to Heydrich, Rapp, and Künzel, May 23, 1940.

declared them to be "racially valuable"). Nevertheless, the logic behind their "recovery" was the same: to facilitate an "immersion into Germandom [*aufgehen im Deutschtum*]." From the very beginning, the "hunt for good blood" would not be restricted by formal institutional barriers, and it was no accident that the official ordinance authorizing the transport of "ethnically alien resettlers" to Germany went out on May 9, 1940 – the same day Himmler launched the Re-Germanization Procedure.[110] Referencing this decision in a letter to Heydrich and Hofmann written a little over a month later, the Reichsführer-SS explained, "Obviously we do not want to bring in any blood that might damage our people, yet we also cannot afford to lose any high-value blood."[111]

The classification of ethnic Germans in late 1939 and early 1940 taught the RuSHA race examiners several critical lessons for the future. They learned that they would have to assume total control over the process and sideline government agencies that might potentially stand in their way. Simply put, they came to realize that the power to ascribe "racial belonging" was a prerogative that had to be jealously guarded against all competitors, both within the SS and outside of it. Yet more than anything else, though it remained unstated, the experience convinced Himmler and his inner circle to enlarge the scope of their search for "lost German blood" (though they certainly never abandoned the effort to consolidate Volksdeutsche either). Alongside the disagreements that divided the SS, the Party, and the Interior Ministry during the early months of German rule in occupied Poland, the troubling aftertaste of their experiences with the Umsiedler confirmed preexisting beliefs about the supranational quality of race, encouraging Nazi technocrats to go far beyond the confines of ethnic benchmarks and seek out "pure Nordic types" among non-German populations, where they believed families of greater "racial worth" lay dormant. And precisely because these people were "submerged in a foreign nation," the danger of leaving them behind for others to benefit from was all the more exigent. The *Heim ins Reich* campaign, in short, formed another crucial link in the chain of events that led to the selection of Polish civilians for the Re-Germanization Procedure – to which we shall now turn our attention.

As we saw in Chapter One, the SS began setting up the Umwandererzentralstelle in the early spring of 1940 to coordinate the assorted imperatives of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* in western Poland.[112] The most influential piece of this nascent system emerged in mid-March, when Himmler established an RuSHA outpost within the UWZ office in Łódź and Hofmann dispatched Ermin Künzel to

[110] BA R 186/11: Himmler, "Anordnung 16/II," May 9, 1940; BA R 69/31/35-38: "Richtlinien für die Sachbearbeitung von Einbürgerungsanträgen," unsigned, November 7, 1940. It seems that the SD did deport at least some of the intellectuals to the General Government; see BA R 69/475/53-54: Tschierschky to Fähndrich, July 10, 1940. The same mandate also encompassed non-German partners in "ethnically mixed marriages" as well as their children; see Leniger, *Volkstumsarbeit*, 201-202.

[111] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/25: Himmler to Heydrich and Hofmann, June 19, 1940.

[112] Ulrich Greifelt, "Die Festigung deutschen Volkstums als zentrale Ostaufgabe" *Reichsverwaltungsblatt* 62 (1941), 509-514. Also see NARA T-81/VoMi/802/2435422ff.

lead it.[113] Despite his age – he had just turned thirty-three – Künzel was a fitting choice for this assignment. Known to colleagues as an assiduous and highly capable Eignungsprüfer, he had served as the principal race inspector at EWZ headquarters in Poznań since November 1939 and thus brought not only dynamism but extensive experience to his new post. Künzel worked closely with the two SD officers in charge of UWZ operations in the Warthegau, Hermann Krumey in Łódź and Rolf-Heinz Höppner in Poznań, who reported to Ehlich at the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin. It was Künzel, however, who engineered the logistical machinery for classifying "racially valuable" Poles and laid the groundwork for the future Aussenstelle.[114] In preparation for the "Second Short-Term Plan" which the Nazis initiated in the late spring of 1940 to free up housing for ethnic Germans from Volhynia, he and the small group of Eignungsprüfer under his command started conducting racial examinations on Polish deportees.[115]

Although they differed in structure and purpose, the UWZ shared much in common with the EWZ: subordinate to both Heydrich's SD as well as the RKFDV, it too was an outfit made up of delegates from separate governmental departments, each of which pursued complementary roles geared around a centrally orchestrated division of labor.[116] Yet whereas the EWZ functioned as a tool of integration, the UWZ was primarily an instrument of ethnic cleansing with its own distinctive techniques. During the first phase of the "evacuation" process, special settlement staffs (*SS-Ansiedlungsstäbe*) consisting of police detachments and at least one Eignungsprüfer surveyed the native population in districts earmarked for incoming ethnic German Umsiedler, whose practical needs clearly dictated the scope and pace of the operation. Höppner and Krumey also consulted the responsible Landräte and labor offices (*Arbeitsämter*) in advance to find out which denizens to exempt from deportation – namely those whom the authorities had recognized as ethnic Germans and Polish skilled workers whose removal would sabotage the region's economic infrastructure.[117] With revised target lists in hand, the settlement staffs returned under cover of darkness, rounded up the inhabitants, and shipped them by truck to transit camps where they underwent a brief racial exam before embarking for Łódź.[118] Roman Sobkowiak, seventeen years old at the time, described the eviction of his family from their home in Szkaradowo as follows:

> Trembling, I unlocked the door. Before I could realize who stood outside, I was roughly forced up against the steps with a rifle-butt, and shouted "You bastards, it's already open!" By the time I recovered, three armed intruders were already in my parents' home. One of them demonstratively

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[113] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 198.

[114] See the personnel files on Ermin Künzel in BDC SSO/226A and RS/D389.

[115] BA NS 2/61/21: Hofmann to Haubold, May 23, 1940. Screenings for the WED first began during the final leg of the "Intermediate Plan"; see USHMMA 15.012M/1/1/15: Hofmann to Künzel, March 16, 1940.

[116] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/45-58: Höppner, "Aktenvermerk betr. Organisation der UWZ," September 2, 1941.

[117] Gerhard Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien und ökonomische Zwänge. Die rassischen Selektionen polnischer Arbeitskräfte durch die SS in den Lagern der Umwandererzentralstelle," in *Nationalsozialistische Lager. Neue Beiträge zur NS-Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik und zur Gedenkstättenpädogogik*, eds. Akim Jah, Christoph Kopke, and Alexander Korb (Münster: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2006), 135-136.

[118] Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1940-1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 145-146.

> laid his revolver on the table. The others held their weapons ready, as if dealing with heavily armed criminals. My father addressed them: "I stood for Kaiser Wilhelm on the front in Russia from 1914 to 1918. Is this the thanks I get for that?" No response. Again the ultimatum: "Half an hour to pack and then out!"… [At the train station] an SS man inspected us from head to toe. He grasped our hair, taking a strand and rolling it between his fingers. Beyond that, he was particularly interested in our eyes… We later learned that he was a doctor from the SS Race and Settlement Main Office.[119]

Upon arrival in Łódź, deportees surrendered any luggage they had brought with them and went through a delousing station in the municipal swimming pool on Dessauerstrasse. After a full body search, they proceeded to the main reception camp, Lager I, at Flottwellstrasse 4. In the courtyard of Lager I, SS and civilian doctors carried out a hasty medical checkup and SD officers interrogated the subjects to gauge their political attitude. The Eignungsprüfer then performed a "rough selection" (*Grobauslese*) to cull "persons who do not appear suitable for permanent residence in Germany," whom the police immediately transferred to Lager II on Luisenstrasse. Whoever remained in Lager I after the first round of evaluations subsequently appeared before the race examiners yet again, this time for a more detailed "fine selection" (*Feinauslese*).[120] The RuSHA slated people deemed "racially valuable enough for future acceptance into Germandom" for the Re-Germanization Procedure, while able-bodied individuals with a "tolerable racial constitution" were conscripted for seasonal work. In each case, the SD fingerprinted and photographed "evacuees" bound for the Old Reich and turned them over to a representative from the Reich Labor Ministry, who accompanied them to Lager III in the suburb of Konstantynów. After that, one last attempt was made to recruit laborers from among the inmates in Lager II (who had been rejected during the "rough selection") though not before the race examiners screened them again in order to weed out "crass deviants from the European norm." Finally, the SD deported everyone in Lager II to the General Government and the labor office sent those in Lager III from Konstantynów to destinations across Germany, either as migrant laborers (*Wanderarbeiter*) or re-Germanizables.[121] Working in this fashion, the UWZ could handle between eight hundred and one thousand people per day.[122]

As this overview suggests, while the classificatory protocol of the UWZ in some ways paralleled that of the EWZ, what truly set it apart was the extent to which racial criteria overshadowed cultural markers of affiliation. There were no longer any VoMi deputies or ethnicity advisers on the scene to counteract the Eignungsprüfer and their curiously inverted belief that foreigners often possessed greater "racial worth" than most Germans. Whereas Künzel expelled a number of people to the General Government who spoke fluent German and were, by his own admission, "German-minded"

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[119] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen BundesRepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 41-42.

[120] Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien," 137. Flottwellstrasse was originally referred to as Wiesenstrasse before mid-1941.

[121] USHMMA 15.015M/2/109/16-17: Barth, "Vermerk betr. Auswahl von Arbeitskräften im Rahmen der Aussiedlungsaktion," April 1, 1940.

[122] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 266.

(*deutschgesinnt*), nearly all of the examinees he selected for the WED could not manage a lick of German and were Poles for all intents and purposes (or at least he thought so).[123] That is not to say the methodology of the RuSHA suddenly became more lenient. On the contrary, between April 1940 and March 1941 the UWZ approved just 10 percent of all Polish civilians screened for labor deployment in the Reich, and only a fraction of them entered the Re-Germanization Procedure.[124] Yet this heightened emphasis on race and concomitant indifference to ethnic factors, including political ones, soon brought the race examiners into conflict with their colleagues in the SD, who placed political security before all other considerations, including racial-demographic ones.

By the late spring of 1940, Heydrich's men had largely resigned themselves to mandate of the "hunt for good blood" and toned down their adherence to a strict equation between ethnicity and political reliability. Sometimes SD officers did challenge the findings of the Eignungsprüfer on purely cultural grounds, even when they had no reason to suspect a political component to someone's chosen ethnic disposition. In August 1940, for instance, the commandant of Lager I claimed that one "racially valuable" family had been "totally Polonized" since the children did not speak German at all and their mother had registered with the police as a Polish national. "Given these circumstances," he advised, "I consider deportation to the General Government absolutely necessary."[125] Still, objections like this were kept to a minimum; with cases involving "Polonized Germans," the SD by and large deferred to the expertise of the Eignungsprüfer. When the head of a UWZ team in Żnin requested clarification on what to do with "several families of German descent" who had "gone over to the Poles," Höppner ruled that their farms could be "opened for evacuation," yet also instructed his subordinate to make sure that "the representative from the RuSHA takes special note of these people."[126]

He and his associates did not abandon security concerns altogether, of course. Indeed, they declared from the outset that they would only sign off on the importation of Poles who did not have a history of anti-German political activity and could therefore presumably be trusted not to stir up trouble in the Reich. Because WED candidates were eventually supposed to become full-fledged members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the police actually spent more time looking into their past than they devoted to vetting other deportees. Once the RuSHA had classified someone as a "desirable population increase," the SD canvassed informants and pertinent records in the locales from which they originated in order to compose a meticulous behavioral profile that governed the final resolution on whether to deploy them in

[123] USHMMA 15.040M/1/244/33-34: Künzel to Krumey, September 11, 1940; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/27: Künzel to Krumey, September 29, 1940. Ethnic Germans whom the UWZ evicted by accident were usually released and sent back home.

[124] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 344.

[125] IPN Fond 358/368/20: Lorenz to Krumey, August 8, 1940.

[126] USHMMA 15.015M/3/165/2: Hahn to Höppner, August 22, 1941; USHMMA 15.015M/3/165/1: Höppner to Hahn, August 27, 1941.

Germany.[127] Investigators were naturally fearful of letting in anyone who had belonged to Polish political parties, nationalist organizations, or militias, though they also focused on alleged indices of biological inferiority such as "reputation, personality traits, dealings with other individuals, social circle, educational background, work performance, diligence, cleanliness, previous economic position, and financial circumstances."[128] In the event of a negative appraisal, the Eignungsprüfer usually labeled the person in question "congenitally ill" and cast them aside – though not always.[129] On one occasion, the SD identified thirty-three internees as "asocials" and deported them to the General Government even though the race inspectors had sanctioned their enrollment in the WED.[130] For the most part though, as long as nothing in their file indicated an "adverse attitude toward Germandom," Höppner and Krumey assented to the re-Germanization of Poles who obtained a superlative rating from the RuSHA.[131]

The most contentious disputes by far arose over prospective candidates whom police functionaries regarded as a threat to internal stability on the home front. They understandably drew a hard line when it came to avowed anti-German "renegades," whereas the Eignungsprüfer maintained that it was precisely these individuals who possessed the greatest "racial value." In short, the struggle between SD and RuSHA officials within the Umwandererzentralstelle reproduced the paradox that lay at the heart of the myth of "lost German blood." The race examiners were certainly not blind to the potential for subversion, but they accepted the risk; for them, the demographic benefit to be gained overrode security anxieties, even if it did not fully erase them. As one RuS-Führer put it, "Lacking knowledge of the German language or having a political history are not obstacles to being proposed for re-Germanization, because these persons will be put under police surveillance in the Old Reich anyhow."[132] SD agents were not willing to take that chance. In September 1940, the Gestapo office in Września demanded the expulsion of several "fanatical German-haters who refuse to abandon their national consciousness," one of whom had supposedly led an underground resistance cell.[133] Earlier that year, Höppner had similarly complained to Ehlich about two "politically troublesome" farmers named Anton Weber and Felix Wisniewski. Although he did not try to refute Künzel's judgment that these men were "capable of re-Germanization on racial grounds," Höppner nevertheless recoiled at the prospect of allowing them to settle in Germany, since Weber was a high-ranking member of the Polish National Union and Wisniewski had joined a Polish paramilitary unit in the aftermath of the First World War. A number of witnesses

[127] IPN Fond 358/249/7: Krumey to Damzog, July 14, 1943. This file contains a standard form for the "evaluation of re-Germanizable Poles" as well as a list of the offices in question.
[128] IPN Fond 358/249/40: "Schreiben an den Herrn Amtskommissar in Przespolew," sig. illegible, March 25, 1944.
[129] IPN Fond 358/245/10: Dinse to Lorenz, March 1, 1941; IPN Fond 358/245/20: Dinse to Lorenz, April 7, 1941.
[130] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/91: Lorenz to Schwalm, February 26, 1941; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/96: Lorenz to Schwalm, March 29, 1941.
[131] IPN Fond 358/249/27: Krumey, "Beurteilung des einzudeutschenden Polen Heinrich Blaszkowski," August 1, 1942.
[132] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/188-189: Scholtz, "Richtlinien zur Eindeutschung polnischer Familien," March 5, 1942.
[133] USHMMA 15.015M/3/225/1-2: SD Wreschen to SD Posen, September 6, 1940.

testified that Wisniewski was "the most dangerous anti-German Pole in the area," his hatred of local Germans so notorious that he went into hiding to escape their wrath once war broke out.[134] Höppner got his way and subsequently deported both men to the General Government along with their families.[135]

In the autumn of 1940, however, Himmler's intervention shifted this tug of war in favor of the RuSHA. On October 9, Krumey conceded that "a review of previous political activity… is not possible at the time of resettlement… the Poles intended for assimilation in the Old Reich should have their political history examined in each case by the SD after the establishment of their fitness for Germanization." Keeping these people in limbo for extended periods turned out to be wholly impractical: they occupied limited space in the UWZ camps, which in turn slowed the tempo of the deportations and impeded the recruitment of laborers as well as the placement of ethnic German colonists. It also contravened the obligation to extract "bearers of lost German blood" from their Polish milieu "without delay." Instead of waiting for the police to conclude their investigations, the labor offices would now transport WED candidates to the Reich at Künzel's behest.[136] Although the SD continued to "send detailed assessments to the agencies in the Reich that are charged with the supervision of these racially selected families," political reliability was no longer a prerequisite for inclusion into the Re-Germanization Procedure.[137] By the time Krumey learned that one inductee had committed "terrorist acts" against Volksdeutsche back in September 1939, there was little he could do except pass this information along; the assailant had already been dispatched to Lower Saxony and commenced his "re-entry" into Germandom.[138]

The race examiners scored a further victory the following month when Himmler sanctioned the creation of an independent RuSHA office on the outskirts of Łódź – the Aussenstelle. The initial spur for this decision actually came from the ever inventive Ehlich, who had floated the idea of erecting a discrete facility in July 1940 so as to "reduce quarrels between members of the RuS and the other departments of the UWZ." Künzel immediately seized on Ehlich's plan and began setting it in motion.[139] Once the necessary preparations were complete, Himmler formally reconfigured the "evacuation" procedure on November 9. Although the "pre-selection" still transpired as before at the UWZ complex on the Flottwellstrasse, the "fine selection" would henceforth occur at the Aussenstelle. Whereas Polish families deemed "unsuitable for Germanization" were "transferred back to the UWZ for conveyance to the General Government," the RuSHA assumed responsibility for the "further care of Germanizable Polish

[134] USHMMA 15.015M/4/260/1: Höppner to Ehlich, May 20, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/4/260/3: Höppner to Ehlich, June 9, 1940.
[135] USHMMA 15.040M/1/244/2: Barth to Künzel, July 25, 1940.
[136] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/31: Krumey to Hahn, October 9, 1940.
[137] USHMMA 15.015M/4/254/2: Höppner to SD Posen, Litzmannstadt, und Hohensalza, October 7, 1940.
[138] IPN Fond 358/249/31: Krumey, "Beurteilung des einzudeutschenden Polen Hieronim Blaszkowski," March 16, 1942.
[139] USHMMA 15.015M/3/194/2: Barth to Höppner, July 31, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/3/194/3: Barth to Höppner, August 8, 1940.

families until the time of their departure."[140] Greifelt confirmed these changes on December 5, notifying RKF delegates on the home front that "the acquisition of Germanizable Poles no longer takes place through the UWZ."[141] Shortly after his appointment as chief of the Aussenstelle, Fritz Schwalm informed them that he and Dongus would now supervise "the tasks that the RuS-Führer in the UWZ previously carried out: the selection of Germanizable Poles and their resettlement in the Old Reich."[142]

Housed in a former convent at Wotanstrasse 73, with its own "race camp" (*Rassenlager*) that held up to 250 people and an adjacent outbuilding retrofitted to serve as a screening office, the Aussenstelle provided the Eignungsprüfer of the RuSHA with their very own laboratory of racial classification.[143] It was a laboratory in the sense described by theorist Bruno Latour: a closed environment where scientific experiments alter the composition of society by replicating "natural" conditions to remake the world into an artificial image of itself. At the same time, the Aussenstelle also functioned as a "center of calculation": a venue for collecting, analyzing, and labeling specimens – in this case human beings – like an archive or museum.[144] To a certain extent, the same could be said of the UWZ compound in Łódź and the mobile commissions of the EWZ. The Aussenstelle, however, was a self-contained site with a unitary purpose, a place where the race examiners did not have to worry about outside interference or heed the alternative viewpoints of other agencies. Although state physicians would still participate in the process, they no longer had a say in the evaluation of hereditary health, and Künzel for one relished the fact that "the doctors only have to trouble themselves with a purely medical diagnosis of the examinees."[145] Released at long last from the oversight of the SD as well, he and his confederates now enjoyed sole authority over the production of knowledge that inherently attended the construction of racial taxonomies. They were free to catalogue people according to race alone and integrate them into the *Volksgemeinschaft* regardless of personal politics or ethno-national affiliation, even if they were "renegades." As Bruno K. Schultz triumphantly proclaimed in the autumn of 1940, "The Re-Germanization Procedure operates from the premise that we have full discretion to choose subjects exclusively on the basis of racial worth."[146]

Of course, this did not mean that Schwalm and Dongus had absolute control over who their "specimens" were or where they came from. The UWZ was obviously the main pipeline for supplying

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[140] BA NS 19/4213: Himmler, "Auslese der einzudeutschenden Polensippen," November 9, 1940.
[141] BA NS 2/61/60: Greifelt to HSSPFs, December 5, 1940.
[142] BA NS 2/61/59: Schwalm to HSSPFs, December 3, 1940. Künzel had since moved on to Prague to establish a similar institution there.
[143] The name of this street actually changed several times during the course of the occupation. The Germans initially called it Landsknechtstrasse, then Spornastrasse, and then Wotanstrasse. Although technically known as Spornastrasse in November 1940, most of my documentation refers to Wotanstrasse, so I use this designation throughout; see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 252-253.
[144] Bruno Latour, "Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World," in *Science Observed: Perspectives on the Social Study of Science*, eds. Karin Knorr-Cetina and Michael Mulkay (London: Sage, 1983), 141-143, 154, 159, 171; Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
[145] BDC SSO/194: Personnel File on Dr. Ernst Fähndrich. The quote comes from Künzel's letter of July 3, 1940.
[146] BA NS 2/161/29-34: Schultz, "Rassische Auslese und Volkstumspolitik," undated.

potential candidates, but it was not the only one. The Aussenstelle employed around twenty Eignungsprüfer and a dozen assistants at any given time, along with a small contingent of auxiliary personnel (guards, secretaries, doctors, cooks, etc.), and all of them remained on the lookout for prospects in the course of their daily lives beyond the walls of the installation.[147] Civil servants and Nazi Party functionaries stationed in the incorporated eastern territories were often eager to chip in as well. In the winter of 1940-1941, for instance, Landräte throughout the Warthegau submitted the names of hundreds of Polish families in their districts whom they believed would make splendid re-Germanizables.[148] In early 1943, to take another example, agents of the Reich Food Estate contacted the RuSHA and offered to open their pool of Polish farmhands for enlistment. "Among these people," one RKF official commented, "there are many who ought to be considered for Germanization on account of their racial phenotype as well as their attitude."[149] In addition to these various sources, local residents sometimes simply showed up at the Aussenstelle and volunteered to join the program on their own.[150]

Irrespective of the subject's origins, however, the praxis of racial classification at the Aussenstelle followed roughly the same modality the RuSHA had already worked out in preceding years, albeit with some novel refinements. In the spring of 1940, Günther Pancke told subordinates that "the guidelines established for the repatriation of ethnic Germans… and the experiences gained in the process, should serve as a prototype for the selection [of re-Germanizables]." Yet he also thought it prudent to "apply significantly stricter standards… because the goal here is to filter out the most racially valuable segments of the Polish nation for an intended assimilation." The cardinal maxim of the WED, he stressed, was that "only those who are racially superlative are granted the distinction of being admitted into the German ethnic community."[151] That March, Otto Hofmann likewise insisted on "a perceptible difference between the evaluation of ethnic Germans and the current protocol"; to that end, he ordered Künzel to "detach" his men from the "previous format" and introduce them to a new one.[152] Another set of regulations elaborated that re-Germanizable Poles should "stand out through behavior, diligence, cleanliness, and health from the rest of the Polish *and* ethnic German population," as well as "stand above the average Reich German of the same social class with respect to race."[153] Although the Eignungsprüfer occasionally made exceptions in borderline cases, in general only people rated RuS-I or II could enter the

[147] BA NS 2/161/63-67: "Liste von Personal und Mitarbeiter des RuSHA," September 15, 1942.
[148] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259: Böttcher to Krumey, December 12, 1940.
[149] BA R 49/73/147: Hintze to Hofmann, Dongus, and HSSPFs, January 1, 1943.
[150] IPN Fond 358/250/119: Weithase to Krumey, July 15, 1942; Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution*, 147.
[151] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/16-18: Pancke, "Richtlinien für die Auslese der polnischen Volksangehörigen in den neuen Ostgauen," undated.
[152] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/15: Hofmann to Künzel, March 16, 1940.
[153] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/189: Scholtz, "Richtlinien zur Eindeutschung polnischer Familien," March 5, 1942 [emphasis in original].

Re-Germanization Procedure.[154] To ensure compliance with this rigorous framework, Hofmann periodically checked in on them, as did the Reichsführer-SS himself.[155]

What all of this amounted to in actuality was an even more fastidious inspection routine that scrutinized the human body down to the most trivial details. In a memorandum entitled "Racial Selection and Ethnic Policy," Schultz offered an elaborate series of scientific arguments to authenticate this approach. He began by outlining some basic principles: "The aim of Germanization is to do everything possible to contribute to the benefit and security of our racial stock… National Socialist ethnic policy must therefore furnish the racially valuable elements of foreign nations for the strengthening of our *Volk*." While consciously citing established anthropological paradigms, Schultz also grounded his conclusions in the laws of genetic inheritance (or at least his understanding of them). The existence of pleiotropic genes – those that affect two unrelated traits – convinced him that "phenotypical and psychological features are determined simultaneously," which meant that "persons who are selected according to a physical racial model also possess the hereditary characteristics and mental faculties of their race." By performing a "holistic" appraisal that accounted for this "unity of body and mind," Schultz avowed, the Eignungsprüfer would be able to "deliver only those racial elements that will enrich the German *Volk*." He alluded to recent research in the field of dog-breeding to substantiate this contention.[156]

Eyewitness testimony confirms that racial evaluations at the Aussenstelle did indeed revolve heavily around the physical appearance of the individual examinee, giving lie to recent claims that professional qualifications and economic productivity were the decisive factors of Nazi racial classification.[157] According to Josef Rembacz, a Polish doctor whom the SS forced to work at the Aussenstelle, RuSHA testing included "the determination of stature, weight, physique, skull shape, width of the face, the size and position of the eyes, the color of the eyes and of the hair, the thickness of the hair, etc."[158] Roman Sobkowiak similarly recalled that the assessor who screened his family "concentrated primarily on our eyes and hair" and took "measurements of my entire body, the mass and structure of my head, chest, and so forth."[159] The Eignungsprüfer did not just peruse the shape and color of the eyes, however; they recorded the "position of the eyeball in relation to the center of the orbital sockets," "the distance of the inner corner of the eye from one side to the other," and "the profile of the normally opened eye and the edge of the eyelids (palpebral fissure)." They scanned not just the contour and proportions of the face, but the location of the hairline, the structure of the cheek-bones (or zygomatic arch) and the jaw (or mandibular angle), the thickness of lips, the texture of skin, the height, width, and curvature of the

[154] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 285-286.
[155] BA NS 2/61/21: Hofmann to Haubold, May 23, 1940; BDC SSO/194: Personnel File on Dr. Ernst Fändrich. This folder contains a letter dated July 3, 1940 in which Künzel mentions Hofmann's initial visit.
[156] BA NS 2/161/29-34: Schultz, "Rassische Auslese und Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[157] See, for instance, Linne, "Die deutsche Arbeitsverwaltung," 52, 169.
[158] Quoted from Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 285-286.
[159] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 53-54, 61-62.

nose, and the extent to which the chin projected outward. Logging these dimensions of the human form ostensibly displayed a person's genealogy with mathematical certainty. In this respect, the Eignungsprüfer utilized a time-honored anthropological device known as the cephalic index – the width of the skull multiplied by one hundred and divided by its length – to gauge cranial capacity. Among other morphological ratios, they also calculated the length of the anterior iliac spine in relation to height to produce another numerical spectrum of "racial belonging" (from 54 percent for the "Nordic race" to 48.5 percent for the "Yellow race").[160]

In tandem with the historical roots of this methodology, the schematic breakdown of racial markers espoused by the RuSHA strongly suggests a collapsing of conceptual boundaries and colonialist distinctions between white and non-white. In picturing examinees as the vestigial descendants of "Asiatic" invaders from the distant past, the Eignungsprüfer invoked discursive tropes that Western scholars had nurtured for more than a century, all the while summoning more recent intimations of an inter-continental race war by fusing them with the familiar icon of the Slavic Flood to symbolize the danger of demographic inundation by a non-European Other. Schultz specifically trained his apprentices to identify "Eastern and East-Baltic types" by their short sloped heads, wide round faces, hooked noses, and widely-spaced eyes, all of which were also supposedly emblematic of "Orientals, Negroes, [and] extremely primitive races." He even taught them to check for the so-called epicanthus, or "Mongolian fold" – a flap of skin over the corner of the eye, "also found among individual tribes of the North and South American Indians and in Eskimos."[161] This same mentality colored perceptions of would-be "ethnic comrades" too. Just as they had done with the Umsiedler, the race examiners categorized virtually everyone who passed through the UWZ camps and the Aussenstelle as one kind of "mixed-breed" or another – even people whom they enrolled in the WED – because most of the anatomical features they concentrated on could theoretically denote a plethora of different races. Steep foreheads, for instance, might indicate either a "Dinaric pedigree" or an "Oriental" one, whereas long straight noses could be a signifier of "Nordic and Falian descent "as well as evidence of "Yellow and Black racial strains." "Relatively full lips" were said to be common "in most of the European races, but also in many non-European races."[162] It is easy to see why "de-mixing" became a top priority for the Eignungsprüfer, which in turns explains why they computed each subject's various "blood-quotients" in exact percentiles. One of their reports mentioned a group of "suitable" families whose "racial makeup" nevertheless contained a 36.8 percent "Eastern component" on average, along with shares of 0.19 percent and 0.75 percent derived from the "Mongolian and Outer Asiatic races."[163] As counterintuitive as it may sound, the WED was

[160] BA R 186/11: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Ausfüllung der R-Karte," undated.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] See the monthly reports of the SS-Sippenpflegestelle in Danzig-West Prussia in BA NS 47/38.

designed to purify *through* miscegenation, to distill and propagate the "Nordic bloodlines" of Germans and non-Germans alike by gradually eliminating their "undesirable elements" through generations of interbreeding. By the same token, this envisioned apotheosis, like the framework of racial selection itself, implied that there was very little to distinguish German from non-German to begin with.[164]

Although we know far more about the "filtration" of ethnic German resettlers than we do about the "sifting" of "racially valuable" Poles, it is still possible to reconstruct what the process was like. Above all, surviving documentation reveals a certain material culture to the praxis of racial classification – a carefully orchestrated affair in which choreographed routines, observational techniques, and diagnostic instruments reinforced the scientific legitimacy of the event while generating unequal power relationships between examiner and examinee. As soon as they arrived from the UWZ camps, prospective candidates were first escorted into the unfurnished waiting room of the screening office and had a placard hung around their necks with their "family number" (*Sippennummer*). They were then forced to undress, as Roman Sobkowiak recounted, while "pieces of clothing lay strewn everywhere on the floor" and "at least twenty naked figures waited until [the Eignungsprüfer] called for us to come into the next room."[165] During the first stage of the examination, subjects were photographed "in a military stance," once from the front and then again in profile from each side; that way, Bruno Schultz and his aides at the Race Office – as well as Himmler himself – would have a chance to endorse or overrule the verdicts of their subordinates if need be. In addition to making use of special equipment from Zeiss Aerotopograph, the Eignungsprüfer followed step by step instructions on lighting, camera positioning, framing, and negative development.[166] Ever mindful of the details, Schultz recommended that they chat with the model so that he or she would "lose nearly all of their shyness in front of the camera and act naturally," enabling the viewer to "observe [them] in their movements and in their typical facial expression" as well as "capture moments which do justice to the essence of the person and emphasize their racial characteristics."[167]

Afterwards, subjects had to stand with their backs against a wall "with their legs closed and their head at eye-ear level" so that assistants could measure their height with an anthropometer. They then sat on an observation table "with the back of their knees on the edge of the table" while the resident doctor performed a battery of medical tests and the race examiner analyzed the standard palette of twenty-one physical features. These evaluations entailed a good deal of uncomfortable and even painful procedures: when the inspector probed the shape of the forehead with a caliper, for instance, or when he braced the back of the skull (the occiput) to gauge its curvature and check for deformities, or when he pressed down on the skin with his finger to ascertain the thickness of subcutaneous fat. Such practices undoubtedly

[164] Longerich, *Himmler*, 599-600.
[165] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 53-54.
[166] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/9: Schwalm to Zeiss-Aerotopograph, January 8, 1941; BA R 69/691/1-29: "Richtlinien für die Bildarbeit in den RuS-Dienststellen," unsigned, undated.
[167] Ibid [emphasis in original].

contributed to the sense of dehumanization many subjects felt, as did the requirement that they appear naked during the entire sequence. In Sobkowiak's words, "what we experienced was no medical investigation," as he and others had been led to believe, "but rather a kind of meat inspection [*Fleischbeschau*]."[168] Those who passed the "fine selection," which lasted about half an hour, then had to present themselves one last time before a review board, where the chair (Schwalm or Dongus) skimmed through their file and compared the results with his own estimations. The other members of the committee gave their opinions as well, and any one of them had the right to veto rulings even at this point.[169] Individuals found "capable of re-Germanization" usually had to wait in the "race camp" for a few days to a few weeks while the RuSHA conferred with the RKF Staff Main Office to arrange "suitable" housing and employment. They were then transferred to the labor office in Łódź, which handled transportation to their new homes in the Reich. Roman Sobkowiak, his parents, and his sister Seweryna were among the lucky ones: they entered the Re-Germanization Procedure and traveled to Schelklingen, a small town outside Ulm. His sister Jadwiga and her husband were less fortunate; the SD deported them to the General Government, where she perished in 1943.[170] Yet regardless of the fallout, people who underwent racial selection at the Aussenstelle were undoubtedly victims of a degrading objectification ritual many of them did not fully understand. Sobkowiak summed up the experience tersely: "I felt like an ape."[171]

With that being said, the obviously callous and bureaucratic character of the process should not obscure how highly interpersonal it actually was. The Eignungsprüfer formed their impressions of the subjects' hereditary health by judging their personality, intelligence, aptitude, and social skills through mundane conversations about family life, work, special interests, and so forth.[172] In short, they got to know them. Unlike officials at the UWZ camps, who could be quite vicious, employees at the Aussenstelle were generally kind, respectful, and friendly toward the examinees – unless it turned out that a given person was "unfit for re-Germanization." "I thank you with all my heart," Zygmunt Urbanski later wrote to Dongus from Germany, "because you were so good to me, and I wish you good luck in your further difficult work."[173] Nearly everyone who entered the WED via the Aussenstelle met and spoke with Schwalm or Dongus, who sought to obtain their consent through promises of fair treatment and a comfortable livelihood in the Reich, not to mention a considerable amount of cajolery. In general, these

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[168] Ibid., 53-54.

[169] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 285-286. The use of a special bunker for resistors, as well as the practice of releasing these people to the UWZ, also comes from the testimony of Josef Rembacz.

[170] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 6-7.

[171] Ibid., 61-62.

[172] BA NS 2/161/29-34: Schultz, "Rassische Auslese und Volkstumspolitik," undated. Also see Hamann, "Erwünscht und unerwünscht, 146.

[173] USHMMA 15.021M/5/34/60: Urbanski to Dongus, February 27, 1942. A number of other re-Germanizables indicated that they received considerate treatment at the Aussenstelle and established amicable relationships with camp personnel; see USHMMA 15.021M/3/20a/100: Konieczny to Schwalm, June 18, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/5/35/46: Geloch to Schmidt, June 25, 1942.

men assured candidates that they cared about them and would look out for them during their "transition into Germandom." Though conditions at the Aussenstelle were tightly regulated, they did not necessarily cause social distancing between inmates and authority figures. Hofmann observed that "when they first arrive at the camp, these people are obviously terrified. Only slowly do they begin to regain some spirit."[174] Depending on the duration of their stay, many re-Germanizables befriended camp personnel, from the Eignungsprüfer right down to the cooks and the guards. Indeed, racial classification was a decidedly intimate undertaking precisely because it relied on face to face interactions, because it hinged on the subjective interpretations of the arbiters as well as the ability of the subject to persuade them of his or her worthiness. It was a transactional encounter, for despite the power disparities involved, both sides had something to sell, and it was never entirely clear who was playing whom.

For all of these reasons, the screening Polish expellees incurred many of the same problems that hampered the naturalization of ethnic German resettlers. The Eignungsprüfer often disagreed with one another on who belonged in the WED. They also clashed with higher-ups in Berlin, who enacted numerous retroactive alterations of earlier verdicts. Although Schwalm ruled that young Josefa Lukasik was "racially valuable" and sent her to live with a certain SS-Brigadeführer Schreier, a subsequent investigation yielded the opposite conclusion. Although Dongus classified Karl Biernacki with the grade 4/5 cd A II, photos of his family persuaded Schultz that he too should "no longer be regarded as fit for Germanization."[175] For all the effort these men put into constructing a methodical, objective, and uniform protocol, "racial value" remained very much in the eye of the beholder. There was so much leeway and so many criteria that it was "virtually always possible in assessing a candidate presenting a 'mixed' racial appearance to give weight to one or several as clear 'proof' of a 'positive' (or 'negative') overall picture."[176] The more contested definitions of "racial belonging" became, the more RuSHA officials compensated by fine-tuning their approach and sharpening entrance qualifications. As a result, they once again could not supply the desired numbers. Himmler initially set the bar at one million, though Höppner disclosed on October 7, 1940 that "the percentage of selected Poles is extraordinarily small. It lies between 1 and 5 percent" (as of June 1941, the acceptance rate hovered between 2 and 3 percent).[177] By November 1940, the RKF had only settled between eight hundred and nine hundred WED candidates in the Reich. Himmler anticipated that "the increasing number of people being registered will lead to the Germanization of 100,000 people," yet also conceded that "in view of the very strict medical and racial criteria, the projected figure of one million probably cannot be achieved."[178]

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[174] BA NS 2/79/155-156: Hofmann to Kaul, February 3, 1941.
[175] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/14: Klinger to Schwalm, April 8, 1941.
[176] Longerich, *Himmler*, 600.
[177] USHMMA 15.015M/4/254/2: Höppner to SD Posen, Litzmannstadt, und Hohensalza, October 7, 1940; BA NS 2/45/160-161: Hofmann to Körbel, June 9, 1941.
[178] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/27: "Vermerk betr. Eindeutschung von Polenfamilien," unsigned, November 1, 1940.

To complicate matters further, many of those whom the Eignungsprüfer judged favorably undermined recruitment through various forms of passive resistance. While some people simply could not wrap their heads around the convoluted principles of racial anthropology, others feigned ignorance as to what the endorsement of the RuSHA actually meant. "We have explained to the Poles again and again," wrote one exasperated functionary, "that on account of their racial constitution they are not actually Poles, but Germans."[179] The race inspectors also struggled with the recurring irritation of individuals whose motives for gaining access to the WED were transparently opportunistic.[180] In one such instance, a man named Kasimir Schzepaniak withdrew his previous commitment upon realizing that he would not be allowed to keep or return to his farm in the Warthegau, turning down pledges of future property compensation and telling Schwalm rather bluntly that he "placed no value whatsoever on moving to the Old Reich as a re-Germanizable."[181] Much to the annoyance of the assessors, it was also not unusual for subjects to disrupt the examination by mocking it, disobeying commands, or refusing to submit to one altogether. [182] In addition to that, more than a few individuals absconded from the camps and went underground.[183] In May 1940, the commandant of Lager I reported that several re-Germanizables had obtained permission to visit the city and never came back. Although he correctly deduced that some internees requested furloughs out of fear that their loved ones would suffer retaliation at the hands of their Polish neighbors, he insisted that granting leave would only increase the risk of flight and suspended this privilege on the grounds that "an absolute maintenance of discipline is no longer 100% guaranteed."[184]

The fact that some prospects outright rebuffed the opportunity to join the Re-Germanization Procedure confronted the Eignungsprüfer with an even more perturbing challenge. There were a number of candidates who would not sign their newly issued passports come what may, having openly admitted "that they did not want to become Germans under any circumstances and would rather die a wretched death in the General Government." "Better to be a beggar than a German" was a commonly heard refrain in the holding camps.[185] In light of this defiance, it is little wonder that SD officers so often complained that the RuSHA had chosen "politically unreliable elements" for re-Germanization. The race examiners reacted to all of this by claiming that "oppositional tendencies" were naturally to be expected among "bearers of lost German blood," a supposed manifestation of their "biological vitality." At the Aussenstelle, Schultz and Dongus dealt with these "renegades" by confining them to a locked bunker and

[179] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/23: Tensfeld, "Bericht betr. Umwanderung (Umsiedlungsfragen)," undated.
[180] IPN Fond 358/250/119: Weithase to Krumey, July 15, 1942; Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution*, 147.
[181] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/38: Schwalm to Krumey, January 15, 1940.
[182] Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 190.
[183] USHMMA 15.040/1/247/153: Schwalm to Hofmann, Greifelt, Koppe, Kaltenbrunner, Damzog, and Lorenz, September 4, 1941.
[184] USHMMA 15.015M/4/262/1: Lorenz, "Aktenvermerk betr. zur Ansiedlung vorgesehenen Familien," May 15, 1940.
[185] USHMMA 15.015M/4/261/10: Lorenz, "Aktenvermerk betr. Fremdenpässe," May 15, 1940.

trying to sway them with "special attention."[186] If that failed to prompt a reversal, they usually handed them over to the police for deportation to the General Government, though at least some recalcitrants were enrolled into the WED anyway and shipped to Germany against their will.[187] On one occasion, Himmler himself visited the UWZ complex and personally tried to coax refractory subjects into changing their minds – apparently with some success, for afterwards Höppner remarked that "since the visit of the Reichsführer… in general the willingness of the families to go to the Reich has increased."[188]

As it turns out, the overwhelming majority of formerly Polish citizens ordained "racially valuable" by the RuSHA accepted this label and assented to re-Germanization – and without the benefit of hindsight, their reasons for doing so are perfectly understandable.[189] We should not be too quick to judge them harshly, for it is easy enough to be self-righteous in the abstract when one is not navigating exigencies that bleed relevance from normal codes of morality. Although some of these people may have instantly succumbed to the allure of being told that they belonged to the "master race" – by men who seemed to possess scientific backing to support such a contention no less – we must also remember that nearly all of them had just been brutally uprooted from their homes and stripped of virtually everything they owned. They were traumatized, vulnerable, and frightened of what the future might bring, and they faced an effective combination of flattery, deceit, and pressure from SS officers. As Schwalm recognized and admitted plainly, availing themselves of the option to start a new life in Germany surely appeared far more promising to most than the bleak prospect of destitution, homelessness, and forced labor in the General Government, where their lives would essentially be forfeit.[190] The inherently coercive nature of ethnic cleansing rendered any semblance of "voluntary registration" almost meaningless, but the decision between preferential status and consignment to the ranks of the "undesirable" was not presented as a fait accompli. These people still had a choice, even if it was a choice between the lesser of two evils. Some of them did hazard the ramifications of expulsion to the east, knowing full well what that portended. Most opted for re-Germanization, which for many must have been an incredibly difficult compromise taken as a measure of last resort. The head of the RKF Staff Main Office, Ulrich Greifelt, later put it this way: "One cannot say that they departed on their own initiative, but they did agree to enter the Re-Germanization Procedure with very few exceptions, and most of the exceptions were allowed to stay out of it."[191] The selection of WED candidates, like the categorization of ethnic German resettlers, could not

[186] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 285-286.

[187] LOC/NMT, 648-649; USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/3: Krumey to Höppner, May 15, 1940. This is what happened to the group of noncompliant candidates mentioned above, since Krumey pointed out that Gestapo agents in the Reich could always just extract their signatures later.

[188] USHMMA 15.015M/4/261/1-2: Höppner to Ehlich and Eichmann, May 10, 1940.

[189] Isabel Heinemann, "Privilegierung und Gewalt: Polnische 'Wiedereindeutschungsfähige' in der nationalsozialistischen Umsiedlungspolitik," in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen Böhler and Stephan Lehnstaedt (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2012), 276.

[190] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/61-62: Schwalm to Fähndrich, September 12, 1941.

[191] See the testimony of Dr. Berthold Willy Bethge in LOC/NMT, 779-781.

function without the input of cooperative civilians, whose actions, whether adopted readily or in despair, helped perpetuate the system as a whole.

Nevertheless, the immense and intricate edifice built up around practices of racial classification by generations of Western scholars did not endow the race examiners with the power to translate theory into reality. On the contrary, they kept stumbling over the same snags because they still ran up against a fundamental perceptual disjuncture. The purveyors of Nazi Germanization policy chased after the telos of a racialized civilization, supremely confident that applied science could avert the apocalyptic specter of degeneration, safeguard the proliferation of the German *Volk*, and usher in a glorious new chapter of human history. Although inspired by a mystical cosmology, their methods of investigation conformed to well-established scientific traditions and called upon the prevailing social mores and cultural attitudes of the time. In this sense, racial selection was not an ideological perversion or abuse of science; it *was* science. Even so, the absolute terms of the Nazi worldview obviously did not correspond to well-defined realities. The notion of "primal races" was a myth with no genuine anthropological or historical foundation, and the principles of racial hygiene likewise rested on an utterly facile and bogus interpretation of molecular biology and genetics. While realistic enough to assure practitioners of their scientific validity, these paradigms could not bend ontological existence to their will. That did not make them any less authentic in the eyes of contemporaries, however. The "hunt for good blood" created an environment in which the process of classification itself affirmed the legitimacy of racial categories, a situation in which praxis reinforced discourse as much as discourse fed into praxis. Indeed, in spite of all the hurdles and inconsistencies that dogged Himmler's agents, trains filled with "Polish families earmarked for assimilation in the Old Reich" began rolling westward from Łódź on May 17, 1940.[192] As of May 28, over two hundred re-Germanizables had arrived in Germany.[193] On June 12, 1940, a further sixty-nine embarked for Mecklenburg specifically.[194] By September of that year, WED candidates resided in counties across Württemberg as well.[195] And the trains continued to roll throughout the fall and the winter and into 1941. Yet from the very moment the Re-Germanization Procedure got underway, its direction was automatically exposed to one big independent variable: the German people. The Aussenstelle vested the Eignungsprüfer with a measure of authority sufficient enough to impart precision and tangibility to the otherwise vague and incoherent blend of ideas that constituted Nazi race-thinking. But they could not exercise nearly the same degree of control once their "specimens" left the laboratory and went out into the world.

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[192] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/3: Krumey to Höppner, May 15, 1940.
[193] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/1: Künzel to Lorenz,, May 28, 1940.
[194] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/10: Seidl, "Aktenvermerk betr. rassische taugliche Familien," June 14, 1940.
[195] Annette Schäfer, *Zwangsarbeiter und NS-Rassenpolitik. Russische und polnische Arbeitskräfte in Württemberg 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 175.

Chapter Three: Re-Germanization

"I do not yet truly belong to the German nation, so I want to do as much as possible to serve the great and glorious Germany."

–Konstantin Celinski

"All that matters is whether the family has been recognized as capable of re-Germanization by the Reichsführer-SS. This cannot be questioned."

–Erich Preiser

On July 19, 1940, Josef Szykowski and his family boarded a passenger train in Łódź bound for Germany. Categorized as "persons capable of re-Germanization" by the race examiners of the RuSHA, the Szykowskis, along with several other Polish families, were leaving their old homeland behind for a new one. Escorted by an SS officer, they began a voyage that took them from the war-ravaged terrain of occupied Poland to the pastoral estate of the Bernau family, outside the town of Heidenheim, near the border between Württemberg and Bavaria. On the way, Josef had an opportunity to take in the sights of the German countryside. "The journey was truly pleasant," he recalled in a letter to Ermin Künzel at the RuSHA Aussenstelle, not only because of the beauty of the landscape, but due to the absence of destruction from bombardment and the sound of military aircraft overhead. From his train window, he glimpsed peasants hard at work in the fields preparing for the autumn harvest. The journey led first to Breslau, then Leipzig, then Dresden, and at each location the Szykowskis dined on soup, bread, and coffee provided by local Nazi welfare agencies. On July 21, the convoy arrived in Stuttgart, where municipal officials assembled the families in a civic hall and arranged for their stay in a "very clean" hotel "with clean sheets too." The next day, representatives from the NSDAP allocated the newcomers to farmers who had come in from the surrounding counties to claim them, each of whom shared a meal with their respective charges before taking them home. Roman Wojciak and Stanislaus Dulat described a similarly hospitable reception. In every city where the Wojciaks stopped in transit on their way to Durbach, at the edge of the Black Forest in Baden, they were cared for by sisters of the German Red Cross, who served them hot meals and played with the children. Upon arrival in Leinefelde in December 1940, a Nazi Party functionary personally greeted the Dulats at the train station and brought them together with other "racially valuable" Poles for a meal at the local inn. There he gave a stirring speech on the virtues of National Socialism before assigning them to their hosts.[1]

[1] USHMMA 15.021M/2/20/129: Szykowski to RuSHA Aussenstelle Litzmannstadt, August 4, 1940. Because the letters of WED candidates stem from the same archive and record group and were addressed to the same office, for the sake of economy I will forego listing this information and designate them only with the reel, section, and page numbers as well as the name of the sender and the date abbreviated in numerical form. For example, 2/20/146: Wojciak, 8.15.40; 5/32/34: Dulat, 2.25.41.

At first glance, the stories of these three families seem downright baffling. With good reason, one does not typically think of Germans living in this time period as having been particularly tolerant in their dealings with foreign laborers from Eastern Europe, let alone expect to see Nazi bureaucrats and SS officers acting on their behalf as helpful chaperons and friendly correspondents. And yet here we have Poles receiving a heartily warm welcome in Germany, almost as if they were long-lost kin returning home. When placed in the context of interwar anxieties over the cultural survival of ethnic German minorities abroad, this cordiality becomes far more intelligible. But it also gestures to a mode of race-thinking that scholars of Nazi Germany have yet to collate into any overarching thesis, one in which imagined blood ties formed the foundation of a grassroots initiative to absorb foreign nationals into the body politic instead ostracizing them.

The present chapter aims to fill this lacuna by reconstructing the everyday experiences and interactions of Polish WED candidates, their German hosts, and the government officials charged with managing their integration into German society. It uses the methods of "thick description" to illustrate a reciprocal dynamic of identity formation and community-building constructed via performative rituals, affective relationships, and the creature comforts of racial privilege.[2] The success of the Re-Germanization Procedure hinged on getting German and non-German participants to see each other as members of a common collective and shared moral economy, on inspiring mutual feelings of fellowship and empathy. We must therefore address the matter of if, how, and why civilians and provincial authorities bought into this objective by seeking to understand assimilation as a product of the social imaginary, as a reflection of the "creative and symbolic dimension… through which human beings create their ways of living together."[3] As Peter Fritzsche reminds us, "National Socialism exerted a strong pressure on citizens to convert… What this meant was that individuals debated for themselves the whole question of *becoming* – of becoming a National Socialist, a comrade, a race-minded German."[4] Far more than their German caretakers, re-Germanizable Poles had to wrestle with the issue of "becoming"; the object of this chapter, therefore, is to interrogate their means of doing so through the most mundane of human activities and routines – speech, material culture, and work, to name a few. Racial classification did not end at the gates of the Aussenstelle, after all; it continued in villages, towns, and cities across Germany and Austria, where people from all walks of life naturally thought they knew best who was

[2] On the practice of "thick description," see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). My approach here also draws on the notion of ideology as social praxis; see Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *On Ideology*, ed. Louis Althusser (London: Verso 2008), 1-60.

[3] The quote comes from John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 6. Charles Taylor has similarly defined the social imaginary as "the ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations"; see Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 23.

[4] Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 8.

German and who was not. But before diving into our analysis of the re-Germanization process at the grassroots level, we must first describe the broader historical context and administrative framework of the WED as an institution in its domestic setting.

Although the Nazis went to great lengths to distinguish re-Germanization from old-fashioned *Germanisierung*, the former was nowhere near as novel as they liked to think. In the first place, it bore a keen resemblance to the paternalistic "civilizing mission" Europeans had pursued for centuries in their overseas colonial dominions – a collection of practices designed to "teach" native peoples the values of obedience, industriousness, honesty, and personal hygiene while forcing them to adopt the language and customs of the white man.[5] The correspondence of SS officers who oversaw the program was chock full of patronizing phraseology that could have come straight from the mouths of Christian missionaries or plantation owners in Africa and the Americas, from the injunction to impart WED candidates with a healthy respect for "German order and cleanliness" to the patronizing promise that "everything will go well for them" if they "behave in a proper and decent way" and "show proof of their cooperation."[6] As these men saw it, of course, there would be a world of difference between the "rehabilitation" of their clients in Germany and the horrors of, say, Atlantic slavery or indentured servitude. For starters, they specifically prohibited economic exploitation, following Himmler's dictum that "this is not a matter of labor deployment in the usual sense, but rather a most imperative ethnic-political duty."[7] They also forbade the use of "coercive measures."[8] According to one RuSHA official, "The task here is to ensure that re-Germanizable families feel at home as quickly as possible and thereby lead them to an inner recognition of their German essence. Obviously such an endeavor cannot be achieved through violence."[9]

This statement all but telegraphs the degree to which the Re-Germanization Procedure represented a continuation of homogenizing drives that began in the nineteenth century. Like most nationalist projects, Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* was all about winning people over; while attempting to marginalize or co-opt aspects of individual and group identities that threatened cultural and political cohesion, it also had to accommodate the interests of potential converts and persuade them to associate

[5] Although this sort of thing was common all over the colonial world, there are some particularly outstanding works on the French model that I have drawn from; see e.g. Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 10-11, 23-28, 165-176. For a more recent treatment, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-37, 212-258.

[6] LOC/NMT, 813-815, Hofmann Defense Doc. 87: "Memorandum for Plant Leaders on the Utilization of Persons Suitable for Re-Germanization" (English transcript), unsigned, September, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/7: Hofmann to Dongus, January 26, 1943.

[7] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/48-51: "Entwurf eines Merkblattes für Betriebsführer," unsigned, undated; BA R 49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940.

[8] BA R 186/11: Faust to Regierungspräsidenten in Kattowitz and Oppeln, June 9, 1942.

[9] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/48-51: "Entwurf eines Merkblattes für Betriebsführer," unsigned, undated.

with the larger national community through various forms of "soft power."[10] Even the "Blood and Soil" ideology that underlay re-Germanization derived from an earlier "geo-organic" concept of acculturation that linked ethnic awareness with the ecological impact of the natural environment (*Umwelt*) and infused virtually every national tradition in Europe with romantic fantasies of an intrinsic, spiritual connection between lands and peoples.[11] At the same time, the Nazis also drew heavily on older colonialist debates surrounding the issue of white acclimatization in the tropics, endorsing a peculiarly Lamarckian idea that settling "persons of good race" in the fatherland would "awaken" their latent capabilities, which could then be passed on to future generations through interbreeding with Reich Germans to produce a new biological stock better suited for colonial settlement and imperial rule.[12] Needless to say, this scheme necessarily subordinated narrow patriotism to the goals of demographic revival and continental hegemony. But it would never come to fruition by any road, so the Nazis believed, without a thorough process of "political education" and "public enlightenment." In this respect, the WED was a corollary of the Nazi cultural revolution, an intensified version of the ceaseless indoctrination Germans had already been exposed to during the 1930s as well as a medium for convincing them to look beyond ethnic particularism and embrace the message of racial unity. Quite in keeping with modernist discourses on the perfectibility of mankind – in the Soviet Union for instance – Hitler and Himmler envisioned nothing less than a transformation of human consciousness, the molding of a "new man" and "new woman" who would abide by the ethic of the "master race" (*Herrenmensch*).[13] It was this expansive totalitarian reach and air of utopian immediacy that made the WED such a radically all-encompassing venture.

For all of its sweeping consequences, racial selection at the resettlement camps in Łódź focused on a very specific aim: classification. Re-Germanization, on the other hand, touched on virtually every facet of daily life, working its way into the minutiae of the public and private spheres. To monitor the development of the program, therefore, the SS erected an elaborate apparatus of governmental oversight that positioned the full force of the state behind the goals of the WED. As one might expect, Himmler stood at the apex of this organizational structure; the "hunt for good blood" was his *idée fixe*, the Re-

[10] Aviel Roshwald, *The Endurance of Nationalism: Ancient Roots and Modern Dilemmas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

[11] See Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 39.

[12] Pascal Grosse, "Turning Native? Anthropology, German Colonialism, and the Paradoxes of the 'Acclimatization Question,' 1885-1914," in *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, eds. H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 180-184. Also see Margaret Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 26, 44; Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 121.

[13] Peter Fritzsche and Jochen Hellbeck, "The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany," in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, eds. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 302-303; Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 237.

Germanization Procedure his "favorite field of racial-political activity."[14] The outfit most responsible for managing the WED, however, was the RKF Staff Main Office. We first encountered this agency in Chapter One, though did not go into much detail about its functions. It is worth taking a moment to do so now. Established in October 1939, the Staff Main Office was the linchpin holding together the diffuse bureaucratic network of the RKFDV, charged with directing the overall master plan of racial consolidation in occupied Europe and coordinating the different governmental entities involved: within the SS, the Reich Security Main Office, the Race and Settlement Main Office, and the Ethnic German Liaison Office; outside of it, Göring's Office of the Four-Year Plan, the ministries of Interior, Labor, Economics, and Finance, as well as the numerous tiers and subdivisions of the civil service and the Nazi Party. Although the RKF did not control any of these bodies outright, they were technically subordinate to it in all matters concerning ethnic German Umsiedler and re-Germanizables (labor deployment, housing, welfare, and so forth). Himmler invested the RKF with the authority not only to issue binding instructions to SS personnel, but to "make use of existing Reich authorities and institutions."[15]

The Staff Main Office consisted of about twenty men headquartered on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin-Halensee, most of them professional technocrats and academics. Its chief, Ulrich Greifelt, an engineer and businessman by trade, served before the war as an expert on the procurement of raw materials and a liaison between the SS and Göring's economic empire. His deputy, Rudolf Creutz, had also worked for him in the Office of the Four-Year Plan, as had Dr. Ernst Fähndrich, who headed the Department of Human Resource Deployment within the RKF. These men dealt primarily with the logistical side of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik*, though it is erroneous to argue, as some have, that they dealt with economics alone.[16] Greifelt had supervised the "repatriation" of ethnic Germans from Italian-held South Tyrol in June 1939, which gave him precious experience in the management of large-scale population transfers. Although trained in the fields of political science and "human economy," Fähndrich was no stranger to the ideological principles of the "hunt for good blood" either. As the point of contact between the RKF and Heydrich's Reich Security Main Office, it was Fähndrich, in fact, who authored most of the directives pertaining to the WED, including a draft of the seminal Ordinance 17/II. Kurt Hintze, who handled the tasks of labor allocation within Fähndrich's office, was also a longtime Nazi activist and a member of Himmler's personal staff to boot. The chair of the Planning Department, Dr. Konrad Meyer, a professor of agronomy at the University of Berlin, had already in 1940 begun sketching out plans for the wholesale enslavement, deportation, and extermination of millions of East European Slavs. Like the race

[14] Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik, 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), 132.

[15] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 56; Helmut Krausnick et. al., *Anatomy of the SS State* (New York: Walker, 1968), 278, 282-283; Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002), 73-76.

[16] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 747-748.

examiners of the RuSHA, these men saw themselves as architects of the Nazi New Order in Europe and reveled in the intoxicating sense of power that came with the ability to effect revolutionary historical change.[17] As Greifelt put it, "We are convinced that an organic order founded on the laws of blood and race will bring about a new epoch."[18]

If the Staff Main Office functioned as the command center of the Re-Germanization Procedure, immediate accountability for its implementation fell to the Higher SS- and Police Leaders (*Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer*, HSSPFs), who acted on behalf of the RKF at the regional level in each of the fifteen SS districts (*Oberabschnitte*) in the Reich.[19] In tandem with officials from the Reich Labor Ministry and the Reich Food Estate, the HSSPFs found housing and jobs for incoming re-Germanizables and reported these openings to the RKF in Berlin and the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Łódź (before November 1940, the RuS-Führer with the UWZ, Ermin Künzel). In conjunction with the county and local group leaders of the NSDAP (*Kreis- und Ortsgruppenleiter*) as well as the Landräte, who presided over civil administration in each town and commune (excepting large cities), the HSSPFs also superintended the "political guidance" of WED candidates.[20] In practice, they usually delegated at least a portion of these duties to special advisers drawn from their staff. Hermann Grotz, for instance, fulfilled this role in Württemberg, routinely traveling around the area to check in on the re-Germanizables deployed there, each of whom he knew personally.[21] It was the HSSPFs, however, who ultimately evaluated the "progress" of these people. As Greifelt explained, "Naturalization will be made contingent on the judgment of the responsible HSSPF, who by virtue of his investigation and supervisory work can obtain a clear picture of every family and individual."[22] The importance Himmler placed on fusing these people into the German peasantry also dictated particularly close ties with the Reich Food Estate – the mammoth Nazi corporation that imposed state control over agricultural production, indoctrinated German farmers with the ethos of "blood and soil," and more generally pursued a mission of "Nordic renewal." The RNS was divided by Gau into regional offices (*Landesbauernschaften*), each of which retained about twenty to thirty district farm

[17] See the personnel files on Ulrich Greifelt in BDC SSO/030A, on Rudolf Creutz in BDC SSO/132 and RS/A5380, on Ernst Fähndrich in BDC SSO/194 and RS/B269, and on Kurt Hintze in BDC SSO/100A. Also see Mechtild Rössler, "Konrad Meyer und der 'Generalplan Ost' in der Beurteilung der Nürnberger Prozesse," in *Der 'Generalplan Ost': Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, eds. Mechtild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher, and Cordula Tollmien (Berlin: Akademie, 1993), 7-11.

[18] Ulrich Greifelt, "Die Festigung deutschen Volkstums als zentrale Ostaufgabe," *Reichsverwaltungsblatt* 62 (1941): 509-514.

[19] On the functions and activities of the HSSPFs, see Ruth Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer. Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1986). During the war, the SS districts were organized geographically to coincide with military defense districts in Germany and Austria.

[20] BA R49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940; USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940. [20] For information on the structure of the NSDAP, see Michael Kater, *The Nazi Party: A Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 232-233. On the Landräte, see Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77-78, 82, 90, 93; Jill Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front: Württemberg under the Nazis* (New York: Humbledon Continuum, 2006), 79-80, 102.

[21] See the testimony of Hermann Grotz in LOC/NMT, 802-803.

[22] LOC/NMT, 784-787, Doc. NO-2481: Greifelt to Himmler (English transcript), August 2, 1941.

leaders (*Kreisbauernführer*), who in turn had scores of local farm leaders (*Ortsbauernführer*) working under them.[23] When it came to the WED, these men (nearly all of whom held rank in the SS) impressed upon host families the "fundamental ethnic-political significance of this measure" and engaged in "persistent supervision of the farms and laborers in question" in order to "facilitate the inclusion of racially valuable families selected for Germanization into the village community and encourage their sedentarization [*Sesshaftmachung*]."[24]

As the complexity of this infrastructure suggests, the Re-Germanization Procedure was not an SS affair alone; it depended on contributions from a broad spectrum of state and Party officials. For that reason, Greifelt moved to bring the various arms of the Nazi regime on board with the "recovery of lost German blood" in the summer of 1940. On June 29, Gestapo offices across Germany were briefed on the details of the program.[25] On July 15, the Labor Ministry agreed to cooperate with the HSSPFs on the selection of employers.[26] After negotiations with the RKF in mid-August, the Nazi Party Chancellery likewise ordered the leaders of National Socialist People's Welfare (*NS-Volkswohlfahrt*, NSV) to register WED candidates for welfare benefits.[27] By November 30, Greifelt could also report that, at his instigation, the Reich Ministry of Economics had "instructed district offices to treat the Germanizable Poles exactly the same as Reich Germans… with regard to the consumption regulations for commercial products."[28] In December 1940, Josef Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, consented to the support of re-Germanizable families through Winterhilfswerk, the Nazis' annual collection drive to finance charity for the poor.[29] Even the military jumped on the bandwagon, taking steps to ensure the provisioning of invalids who had fought for the German army during the First World War.[30]

If Himmler's agents thought they could easily balance the components of this multipolar bureaucratic edifice, however, their assumption quickly turned out to be sorely mistaken. Despite the fact that in many locales NSDAP cadres and civil servants were one and the same, the dualism and overlapping competencies of Party and state opened the door to all kinds of disputes. Indeed, political infighting surfaced as soon as the gears of the WED machinery clicked into place and started to turn. In June, Otto Hofmann spent a week traveling across the Reich to sell the initiative to regional officials and clarify their obligations – in effect, to set the system in motion in the provinces – but it was also

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[23] On the RNS, see Daniela Münkel, *Bauern und Nationalsozialismus. Der Landkreise Celle im Dritten Reich* (Hannover: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1991), 61-62; Theresia Bauer, *Nationalsozialistische Agrarpolitik und bäuerliches Verhalten im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Eine Regionalstudie zur ländlichen Gesellschaft in Bayern* (Munich: Lang, 1996), 184-185; Uwe Mai, *Rasse und Raum. Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 41.

[24] BA R 3601/2365/1: Haidn to Landesbauernschaften, June 19, 1940; BA R 3601/2354/4: Darré to Landesbauernschaften, July 18, 1940.

[25] Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt (=HStD) G 15, J 534: Müller to Staatspolizei(leit)stellen, June 29, 1940.

[26] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/5: Beisiegel to Landesarbeitsämter, July 15, 1940.

[27] BA R 59/46/3: Hoffmann to NSV-Hauptamt Berlin, August 15, 1940.

[28] BA R 49/73/10: Greifelt to HSSPFs, November 30, 1940.

[29] BA R 49/73/17: Winterhilfswerk Berlin to Gaubeauftragten, December 23, 1940.

[30] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/47: Reinecke to Hauptversorgungsämter, March 18, 1941.

something of a fact-finding mission. In a summary report, Hofmann conveyed extreme satisfaction with the enthusiasm of his colleagues. The HSSPF for SS-District North Sea "recognized the necessity of these measures as well as the importance of the project and promised his full support." The Gauleiter and Landesbauernführer sent word of their approval as well. In Vienna, the HSSPF for SS-District Danube said he would apprise the host families of their responsibilities in person. To the west in Salzburg, Hofmann wrote, "all those present understood my explanations to the fullest extent and endorsed the meaning and purpose of the operation." The Landesbauernführer "expressed full readiness to sponsor the action through his employees," and the HSSPF for SS-District Alpine "showed the greatest understanding of the initiative and urged the Landesbauernschaften to report suitable estates to him as soon as possible."

These signs of concord, however, were accompanied by inklings of conflict. Hofmann questioned whether the Party leadership had even notified subordinates about the WED, having discerned that local branches of the RNS and the NSV were still not on the same page. What was worse, some of them openly opposed the placement of re-Germanizables in their domains on ethnic-political grounds. The delegate of the Landesbauernschaft in Kurhessen, Karl Patry, "raised strong objections to this 'infiltration'" because his enclave already contained large numbers of Polish forced laborers. When Hofmann "indicated repeatedly that this action does not represent an infiltration, but rather a strengthening of German blood," Patry's riposte shifted the crux of the debate to logistical complications, pointing out that 80 percent of the farms in Kurhessen were smallholdings, which afforded few opportunities for lodging and employing yet more immigrants. Some Nazi functionaries seemed to respond to news of the WED in a more cynical fashion. The Landesbauernführer for southern Bavaria pledged to advance the twin objectives of "weakening the Poles racially" and "strengthening German blood," though Hofmann got the impression that obtaining state funds to renovate local farmhouses was "more important to him" when he reasoned that it would offer "an incentive for farmers to take in the selected Polish families."[31]

Aware that state and Party apparatchiks might fail to grasp the "true purpose" of the Re-Germanization Procedure, Himmler's agents also worried that inductees themselves might step out of line. Although classified and extolled as members of the "Nordic race," there was always a nagging suspicion that these people would easily revert to their old "Polish ways" if given the chance. This contradictory perception – reminiscent of how Germans typically conceived of Auslandsdeutsche as well as the derogatory stereotypes they used to describe Slavs – produced an ambivalent rendering of WED candidates as liminal figures, an image codified above all by the citizenship status listed on their passports: "Nationality undetermined, German?"[32] To preclude recidivism from the outset, the SS undertook to regulate their daily lives through an array of disciplinary mechanisms that functioned in

[31] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.
[32] Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg – Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen (=StS) Wü 168 T2, Nr. 207: Müller to Landesgestüt Württemberg, December 9, 1941.

concert with continuous observation. The most direct means of monitoring them from afar, however, may seem a bit surprising. At the Aussenstelle, the race examiners instructed each outgoing candidate to write them frequently; they even distributed official stationery and stamped envelopes.[33] These letters, many of them personally addressed to Künzel, Schwalm, or Dongus in the intimate Du form, supplied critical intelligence on how re-Germanizables were getting along in the Reich. Had they received adequate accommodations, food, wages, and furniture? To what extent had they learned German language? Were there any Polish laborers in the vicinity and, if so, were they able to maintain a healthy distance from? Did they get along with their German hosts and neighbors? The information gleaned from the answers to these questions coursed throughout the arteries of the Nazi state apparatus, for RuSHA personnel passed on extracts of the letters not just to Himmler and the HSSPFs, but to local Party and administrative offices as well, thereby enhancing government oversight as a whole.[34] "Naturally we would like to know that these families are being treated on an equal footing with German ethnic comrades," Schwalm remarked.[35]

The Re-Germanization Procedure also entailed a sophisticated network and intensive regimen of police surveillance.[36] Although introduced to ensure that German caretakers acted in an "equitable and politically correct" manner, this system also enabled the SS to evaluate the candidates' "progress." According to one RKF official, "Admission into the Re-Germanization Procedure is tantamount to neither an immediate conferral of German citizenship nor formal acceptance into the German ethnic community… Re-Germanizable persons have to go through a period of probation, during which they are closely observed and continuously investigated."[37] To this end, the Landräte routinely dispatched gendarmes and constables to check in on the households that employed them; after consulting the mayor, Ortsbauernführer, and ranking NSDAP functionary, these officers then composed detailed "activity and mood reports" submitted in quarterly installments to the Gestapo.[38] In February 1941, for instance, Landrat of Friedberg directed the chief gendarme in Nieder-Florstadt to keep an eye on the Rudownik family and "unobtrusively determine how they are accommodated and treated, and also how the family members themselves behave, especially toward Polish civilian laborers." The gendarme reported back several weeks later that he had found "nothing unfavorable" about the treatment of the family and "nothing disadvantageous" about their conduct, since Rudownik's boss commended him as "a very reliable and hard-working individual" and the family adopted a "restrained posture" toward Polish

[33] Isabel Heinemann, "Privilegierung und Gewalt: Polnische 'Wiedereindeutschungsfähige' in der nationalsozialistischen Umsiedlungspolitik," in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen Böhler and Stephan Lehnstaedt (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2012), 267.

[34] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.

[35] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/37-38: Schwalm to Hofmann, July 22, 1941.

[36] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940.

[37] BA R 49/73/144-145: Hintze to Frick, January 9, 1943.

[38] Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg (=HStM) 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 2: Landrat Fulda to Lipps, August 5, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.

workers.[39] The testimony of Zofia Pieskarska provides further insight into what these visits were like: "One day, a German official in civilian clothes came to the house of my employers to talk with my mistress and afterwards to me. He asked me how I felt, where I spent my free time, who I kept company with, whether I wrote letters home… I also know that the Gestapo periodically telephoned my mistress to inquire about my behavior."[40] The activity and mood reports compiled on the basis of such interviews, along with "all pertinent facts" gathered from the RNS and NSV, went into special files housed in the offices of the HSSPFs, who were thus able "to gain a clear picture of the activity and conduct of persons suitable for Germanization at any time" and verify "that their attitude corresponds to their racially superior external appearance."[41] Although ostensibly designed to guarantee fair treatment, however, all of these measures convey with unmistakable clarity the tenor of extreme caution and paranoia that characterized the enactment of the WED on the home front.

The spatial dimension of the program is especially instructive in this regard. On the one hand, the SS exercised tight control over the candidates' mobility; they were forbidden from changing jobs or residences without the permission of the HSSPFs, who every month presented Fähndrich with an inventory of all re-Germanizables living under their purview, complete with figures on arrivals, departures, births, marriages, and deaths.[42] On the other hand, the entire premise of re-Germanization necessitated their settlement in a "purely German environment," which by and large meant the countryside, where the landscape would supposedly awaken the "mystical bonds of the Nordic race" and kindle a newfound devotion to the *Volk*.[43] Yet if living in a "purely German environment" was supposed to beget a "re-entry into Germandom," some locations seemed more conducive than others. Himmler limited the allocation of re-Germanizables primarily to eight SS districts – which together formed a crescent-shaped swathe of land running from the North Sea coast down through Westphalia, the Rhineland, and Hesse into Württemberg and then southeastward into Bavaria and Austria – and barred them from areas designated as "ethnic-political danger-zones," where the local population would presumably compromise the assimilation process.[44] Due to the proximity to Poland, he initially forbade settlement anywhere east of the Elbe River.[45] When Ehlich learned that subordinates had earmarked a

[39] HStD G15, J 534: Landrat Friedberg to Gendarmerie Nieder-Florstadt, February 21, 1941; HStD G15, J 534: Gendarmerie Nieder-Florstadt to Landrat Friedberg, March 13, 1941.

[40] United States National Archives and Records Administration – Record Group 238 (=NARA/NMT) M894/15/5269: Testimony of Zofia Pieskarska, undated.

[41] LOC/NMT, 784-787, Doc. NO-2481: Greifelt to Himmler (English transcript), August 2, 1941.

[42] Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen – Standort Düsseldorf (=LNWD) Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19997: Schneider to Regierungspräsident Aachen; BA R 49/73/56-58: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, August 7, 1941; HStD G15, 5968: Waldeck to Landrat Lauterbach, April 23, 1942.

[43] See Fähndrich's introduction in *Der Menscheneinsatz: Grundsätze, Anordnungen und Richtlinien* (Berlin: Hauptabteilung des RKFDV, 1940), viii. Also see Helmut Wilhelm Schaller, *Der Nationalsozialismus und die slawische Welt* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2002), 103-104.

[44] BA R 49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940.

[45] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/8-10: Künzel to Greifelt, September 6, 1940.

group of candidates for Frankfurt an der Oder, he rebuked them sternly; the city was "an ethnic-political danger-zone and therefore obviously unsuitable for the Germanization of Polish families."[46] When one family accidentally ended up in Rostock, Schwalm told the Landrat there to get in touch with the RKF and transfer them elsewhere.[47] The term "ethnic-political danger-zone" applied not only to sections of Germany that adjoined the territory of the former Polish state, but to all "ethnic borderlands" where "the possibility exists that alien ethnicities will have an unfavorable influence on Germanizable persons."[48]

The security logic governing this pattern of dispersion operated on a sub-regional level in the hinterlands of the Reich as well, particularly those that encompassed indigenous Slavic-speaking minority groups, such as the Sorbs in Lusatia. With the help of Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, Greifelt and Fähndrich came up with a long list of proscribed locales where "non-German, mainly Slavic peoples or non-German language groups live to a more or less significant extent": the provinces of East Prussia, Silesia, Carinthia, Vienna, Bohemia, and Moravia, the districts of Arnsberg, Münster, Düsseldorf, Schleswig, Köslin, Schneidemühl, Bautzen, Löbau, Chemnitz, and Frankfurt an der Oder, as well as virtually all of the Sudetenland region annexed from Czechoslovakia in 1938.[49] Given the expectation that "Germanizable persons will form personal relationships with ethnically alien workers," RKF officials also tried to ban their settlement in areas with sizable contingents of foreign laborers, though they acknowledged that this provision could only cover larger territories, not individual workplaces, because there were "numerous prisoners or migrant workers in nearly every village in the Reich."[50] Recognizing the impracticality of a comprehensive ban on "farms where other ethnically alien laborers are already employed," Himmler left it to the HSSPFs to "find the proper possibilities for a separation."[51] Günther Pancke, whom we encountered before during his tenure as head of the RuSHA, set out to do just that in his capacity as the HSSPF for SS-District Middle. In December 1940, he ordered his adviser on re-Germanization affairs, Wilhelm Dörhöfer, to concentrate all resident inductees in the county of Uelzen and have the labor offices to exchange them with any Polish laborers stationed there.[52]

On account of the "close connection between Catholicism and Polishness," Himmler and his underlings were equally nervous about quartering re-Germanizables in predominantly Catholic areas. The story of Ursula Pudelska offers an illustrative example of the anxieties this triggered. In a letter to the Aussenstelle written in May 1941, Ursula vividly described Munich's famous Catholic churches as well as her interactions with local Germans. "The people here are very devout and religious," she wrote, "They

[46] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/14: Ehlich to Damzog, July 5, 1940.
[47] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/11: Schwalm to Landrat Rostock, January 9, 1941.
[48] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/162: Lorenz to HSSPFs, October 9, 1942.
[49] BA R 49/73/20-21: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, January 6, 1941.
[50] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/162: Lorenz to HSSPFs, October 9, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/15-17: Greifelt to Hofmann, October 9, 1940.
[51] BA R 49/73/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 17/II," May 9, 1940.
[52] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 115: Pancke to Dörhöfer, December 6, 1940.

greet each other only with 'God greets you' [a curiously Upper German expression]." They also granted her "the greatest spiritual freedom" and allowed her to attend Mass and take communion daily. The desire to participate in the spiritual life of co-religionists inspired Ursula to learn the German language and join a local congregation – during a Pentecost service, when she heard "magnificent prayers" and "gorgeous songs" that reminded her of ceremonies back home "because the melodies are the same, only in German." In Himmler's eyes, however, Ursula's pious attachment to Munich was a source of deep consternation that prompted him to ask Heydrich and Greifelt "whether we should place Poles in Catholic cities at all." "This must be avoided" one of them scribbled in the margin of his inquiry.[53] Hofmann likewise asserted that re-Germanization in the Catholic locales of western Germany would "incur particular difficulties for confessional reasons," though he was more apprehensive about the overwhelmingly Catholic population of his native Austria. When he met with HSSPF Ernst Kaltenbrunner in Vienna in June 1940, the latter also expressed reservations about whether "racially valuable" Poles should be incorporated into the Austrian peasantry and permitted to eat together with the farmers, drawing attention to the "unusually close sense of community" that existed between estate-owners and hired hands on Austrian farms. As we will see, sharing a common table with Germans at mealtime was a central feature of the Nazis' prescribed modality of assimilation. In this instance though, Hofmann replied that the issue would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis and presumed that the families would "probably sit at their own table."[54] The same misgivings were even more pronounced in the event of supposed "ultramontanism," or "papism," that is, political Catholicism. When Greifelt got word in March 1941 that the patriarch of one host family was a former member of the international organization Catholic Action, he protested to Reich Minister of Labor Erich Franz Seldte that the billeting of re-Germanizables in this household was "thoroughly undesirable."[55] With respect to geographical distribution in particular, the day-to-day management of the WED fed off of older religious prejudices as well as strictly ethnic ones.

Nevertheless, the label "ethnic-political danger-zone" did not permanently sequester a given location. Himmler always reserved the right to open up districts for settlement as he pleased, even if he had to rely on the acquiescence of regional state and Party authorities. Sometime in the early autumn of 1940, he authorized the deployment of re-Germanizables east of the Elbe River in special cases, though stipulated that the regional HSSPFs had to obtain his personal approval first.[56] By early 1941, he had dropped this proviso and fully "unlocked" SS districts Middle, Spree, Elbe, and East Sea – albeit "with the exception of a few districts in which Slavic ethnic groups are present" – despite Frick's warning that

[53] 5/36/41: Pudelska, 5.27.41; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/40: Brandt to Heydrich and Greifelt, July 7, 1941.
[54] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.
[55] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/70-72: Greifelt to Seldte, March 3, 1941.
[56] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.

these "ethnically endangered eastern territories of the Reich are especially unsuitable."[57] Logistical and economic factors precipitated this expansion. Although the Nazis preferred to place WED candidates on small, independent farms, the larger manorial estates of eastern Germany had a much greater capacity to absorb them, and relocating families who had already been sent there by mistake would have disrupted agricultural production. Still, for the most part the RKF held firm to the initial territorial specifications. As of June 30, 1941, there were 4,838 re-Germanizable Poles living in the Reich, a huge majority of them in the original eight SS districts Himmler had chosen a little over a year before: a total of 3,986 to the west and south – 644 in North Sea (Hamburg), 639 in Fulda-Werra (Hesse-western Thuringia), 593 in Danube (eastern Austria), 511 in Rhine (Rhineland), 477 in Southwest (Baden-Württemberg), 466 in West (Westphalia), 357 in South (southern Bavaria), and 299 in Alpine (western Austria) – as opposed to a total of 586 to the east and north – 206 in Middle (Lower Saxony), 200 in Spree (Brandenburg), 116 in East Sea (Mecklenburg-Pomerania), and 64 in Elbe (Saxony). The remaining 266 went to SS-District Westmark (Saar-Lorraine), which was added to the list in July 1940.[58]

No matter where these people ended up, however, the managers of the WED could not escape their reliance on citizens in the provinces to carry out re-Germanization on the ground, which is why the SS vetted potential host families beforehand – not just to confirm their ideological dedication and personal rectitude, but to "ensure that the Germanization process will be carried out in a politically appropriate manner."[59]As Bruno Schultz explained, "For the collective life of human beings, and especially for people of the Nordic race, it is of decisive importance whether these subjects live together with people who are deeply emotional or shallow, courageous or cowardly, truthful or mendacious, energetic or weak."[60] It should come as no surprise that many caretakers were card-carrying members of the Nazi Party. Greifelt specifically advised that the employers, or Betriebsführer, as they were called, should be recruited from the ranks of "old Party comrades and reliable members of Party organizations."[61] A number of re-Germanizable Poles lived with government officials as well, from mayors and civil servants to the county and local leaders of the Reich Food Estate to SS security personnel to the race experts of the RuSHA themselves, all of whom helped shape the everyday context of the WED alongside civilian overseers. It seems that SS and Party functionaries "advertised" the program within their own circle of acquaintances through word of mouth, though the RuSHA examiners in Łódź also sometimes awarded candidates to friends and cronies in the Reich. The HSSPF in Baden-Württemberg, Kurt Kaul,

[57] BA R 49/73/20-21: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, January 6, 1941; BA R 49/73/52-53: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, July 30, 1941; LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19997: Frick to Regierungspräsident Koblenz, November 20, 1940.
[58] USHMMA 15.021M/6/46/1-2: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, June 30, 1941.
[59] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/26: Dongus to Arbeitsamt Brandenburg, January 13, 1941.
[60] BA NS 2/161/29-34: Schultz, "Rassische Auslese und Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[61] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940.

even accused Schwalm of abusing his position to privilege farms in Hesse, where he had grown up and served as RuS-Führer during the 1930s.[62]

All of this is to say that the attitudes and behaviors of the host families do not yield a representative sample of the attitudes and behaviors of the German population as a whole. Be that as it may, most of the Betriebsführer were non-state actors and many were not even members of the NSDAP. Any German citizen could apply for the services of a re-Germanizable laborer by filing the requisite paperwork with local authorities, and many did. Over a mere two-day span in January 1941, Dongus corresponded with the HSSPFs on no less than seventy-two individual applications.[63] In November 1940, to take one example, a man named Hermann Bornecke wrote to SS-Obersturmführer Richard Schill in Brunswick to inquire about the possibility of acquiring several WED candidates. Schill forwarded the request to Schwalm, who responded to Bornecke in a letter of his own: "Before the deployment can take place you must go through the necessary formalities. You must consult your responsible Kreisbauernschaft and fill out the employer questionnaire for the allocation of Germanizable Polish families. This questionnaire then goes to the HSSPF Middle in Brunswick. After the employer questionnaire comes here, we take care of the placement."[64] The procedure for screening prospective hosts began with this form, which included the name and address of the employer, the size and type of their farm or business, and a short political evaluation of the family, followed by a series of questions. Did they want an individual worker? If yes, male or female? Or perhaps they would prefer a whole family? Could they supply re-Germanizables with sufficient housing and furniture? How much land would they be willing to set aside for them? RNS agents and labor officials recorded this information on the spot and entered it into the last section of the application, which the HSSPFs then had to approve, sign, and forward to the RKF, which in turn contacted the Aussenstelle (though some employers wrote there directly).[65] The HSSPFs usually grounded their judgments on the observations of their own consultants, who also inspected these households in advance.[66]

The re-Germanization adviser for HSSPF Pancke in Lower Saxony, Wilhelm Dörhöfer, left a lengthy collection of these investigations, replete with a wealth of details on what the Nazis looked for in a Betriebsführer. In the first place, they had to be able to provide employees with the basic material comforts of everyday life. An essential prerequisite for Dörhöfer's endorsement of Heinrich Meyne was the "excellent impression" his farm left, as well as the availability of a "newly built domicile with every conceivable accessory."[67] In a similar vein, he approved the application of Heinrich Bischoff in large

[62] BA NS 2/79/151: Hofmann to Kaul, May 19, 1941.
[63] See the control lists of applications for January 1941 in USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/79-101.
[64] USHMMA 15.021M/1/2/6: Schwalm to Bornecke, January 6, 1941.
[65] BA NS 2/160/8: "Formblatt zur Aufnahme einzudeutschender Polenfamilie," undated.
[66] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19997: Jeckeln to Regierungspräsident Aachen, November 15, 1940.
[67] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 154: Dörhöfer to Pancke, July 17, 1941.

measure because "The available dwelling is adequate. There is a bedroom for two adults and two children, a small den, a parlor, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a pantry."[68] Another farmer, Rudolf Niemann, could offer a vacant farmhouse fully-equipped with beds, kitchen appliances, and furniture, as well as a stall for pigs and chickens and a small vegetable and fruit garden. He too was accepted.[69] Dörhöfer clearly put a premium on political reliability. Meyne was a "Party comrade" who made "a very good overall impression." Niemann was a "Party comrade" and SA man who enjoyed "a good reputation within the Bauernschaft and the Labor Office." Bischoff was not only a Nazi Party cell leader, but the deputy of the local Ortsgruppenleiter and Ortsbauernführer: "He knows how to treat the family properly," Dörhöfer concluded. Even so, membership in the NSDAP did not guarantee his assent. Take the case of Count Bechthold von Bernstorff, an SA man and army officer who nevertheless had "little feeling for National Socialism of the deed [*Nationalsozialismus der Tat*]." Dörhöfer therefore rejected his request "because the Germanizable Poles must be won over to the National Socialist worldview through a dependable influence."[70] The absence of previous Party commitments did not exclude an applicant from consideration either. Karl Meyer was "no Party comrade," but he was "a man with special character," so Dörhofer judged that he and his farm were "suitable for the assimilation of a Germanizable Polish family."[71] Yet regardless of the final decision, the conventions used to screen the Betriebsführer reveal a profound sense of dread that some Germans might corrupt the assimilation process.

There were good reasons to think this way. No matter how "politically reliable" they may have been, the SS was asking hosts to unlearn long-standing traditions of social discrimination against Polish migrant workers, who had been frequently overworked, underpaid, and mistreated by their German overseers, not to mention subject to oppressive measures of government oversight, from the days of Bismarck on into the 1930s. Throughout this stretch of time, Germans often looked down on them as primitive, immoral ruffians, as "Polacks" – then as now, the most well-known anti-Polish epithet – a term that fixed their second-class status in the popular imaginary as a "socially nonintegrated and culturally despised minority."[72] The Nazi regime intentionally promoted and deepened these attitudes, especially after the influx of Polish Wanderarbeiter began in early 1940. On March 8, 1940 Göring issued Gestapo offices with a set of statutes that institutionalized their alleged racial inferiority with repressive legal underpinnings. The similarity with Greiser's policy of apartheid in the Warthegau could not be more evident. Paragraph Six of the "Pole decrees" prohibited "all social contact with the German people,"

[68] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 1: Dörhöfer to Pancke, November 4, 1941.
[69] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 140: Dörhöfer to Pancke, October 1, 1941.
[70] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 134: Dörhöfer to Pancke, May 6, 1941.
[71] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 98: Dörhöfer to Pancke, May 9, 1941.
[72] Christoph Klessmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, 1870-1945. Soziale Integration und nationale Subkultur einer Minderheit in der deutscher Industriegesellschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 51; Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 36-37, 45.

specifically outlawing the shared usage of churches, trains, bars, theaters, and cinemas. Any violation of these rules warranted internment in a concentration camp, as did any and all hints of disobedience or loafing on the job. Paragraph Seven stipulated that, "Anyone who has sexual intercourse with a German man or woman, or approaches them in any other improper manner, will be punished by death." Finally, the decrees obligated Poles to wear an identification badge on their clothing – a violet letter "P" inside a yellow square, sewn over the right side of the chest – to distinguish them from Germans.[73] Although effective to a degree, however, it would be wholly false to claim that Germans uniformly adhered to these strictures. The SD repeatedly observed that civilians all over the Reich had failed to adopt the "appropriate attitude" toward Polish laborers.[74]

On the one hand, widespread contempt for Poles did not bode well for the desired integration of WED candidates into German society. On the other hand, evidence of *Polenfreundlichkeit*, or friendliness to Poles, suggested that hosts would not properly segregate re-Germanizables from their Polish countrymen. To avert "all defamation and poor treatment on the job and in general life," Gestapo officers notified the Landräte that "existing security police provisions for Polish laborers do not apply for Germanizable Poles," yet also demanded that they be "prevented from coming in contact with other Poles."[75] It was ultimately up to Germans themselves, however, to "sever the old connection of the re-Germanizables to their homeland, their relatives, and the Polish nation" and "exercise their educational influence in such a way that the Poles quickly merge into Germandom."[76] In other words, the Nazis entrusted ordinary civilians with the power to implement nationalization as they saw fit, or as Greifelt put it, "The success of the measure depends essentially on the aptitude of the Betriebsführer."[77] The race and resettlement experts therefore distributed a leaflet with guidelines on the treatment of WED candidates to every household where they resided.

The document began by announcing to recipients that they had been "charged with a task of the greatest responsibility, that of familiarizing these people with German life and culture and leading them step by step into the German ethnic community… You must be aware of this important task. You are expected to carry out a mission of the greatest value to the German people." The wording of the text did not shy away from elucidating the program's rationale in the terminology of racial imperialism: "The consideration that many Polish families have German ancestors was decisive…The healthy, clean, and decent impression left by these families in distinction from the mass of other Poles indicates that the German blood in their veins has not yet completely succumbed. It must be our aim to restore these

[73] Ibid., 131, 135-138. Also see Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 222-223.

[74] Ibid., 226. Also see Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 278.

[75] HStD G15, J 534: Gestapo Giessen to Polizeidirektor Giessen, Gestapo Bad-Nauheim, Landräte in Giessen, Alsfeld, Büdingen, Friedberg, and Lauterbach, December 7, 1940.

[76] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/48-51: "Entwurf eines Merkblattes für Betriebsführer," unsigned, undated.

[77] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940.

persons to the German people without fail." The bulk of the pamphlet contained instructions designed to differentiate WED candidates from "pure" Poles: "Re-Germanizables," read the first, "must be treated as Germans and are not subject to the special regulations effective for Poles or other foreigners." The second stated that "The term 'Pole' or that of any other foreign people must never be used in connection with these persons" and that "all intercourse between re-Germanizables and individuals of their former nationality must be prevented." Directives four through six informed proprietors that WED candidates were entitled to the same wages, free time, and rations that German employees received.[78] Yet while the brochure entreated German caretakers to show "great patience" in their interactions with these people, it also emphasized that naturalization was incumbent on the personal strivings of the individual subject, who had to "do their best to become valuable members of the German *Volk*." "Naturally," the handout told hosts, "this demands that your attitude be firm but just toward possibly unjustified demands from re-Germanizable families and individuals. We see no reason to grant them more than our own fellow citizens; it is rather up to them to prove through their actions that they belong to the German nation." One RuSHA operative amplified this point: "It is made clear [to them] during their transport to the Old Reich that they must start out small… We have promised them that they will be settled as free people, treated lawfully and kindly, and, if they are obedient, fit for service, and industrious, that they can in the course of time again reach high and become German citizens."[79] The achievement of this end goal, however, remained fundamentally tethered to a rather simple question: Would Germans in the Reich, both within the Nazi regime and outside of it, buy into the "hunt for good blood"? In short, would they play ball?

We can say with certainty that a substantial number of inductees did develop friendly relationships with their custodians, many of whom believed they were the very same people German politicians had been trying to "rescue" from exile ever since the end of the First World War. So, for instance, the initial loneliness Stanislawa Kowalska felt after arriving in Ulm soon dissipated because "the woman to whom I was entrusted is very good to me and we get along famously." Lucja Marchlewska likewise reported that her employer greeted her with open arms and lavished her with kindness.[80] The Betriebsführer could also be quite helpful in assisting with problems and dealing with officialdom, especially if their guests did not speak German. When the chamber of commerce in Landstuhl declined to register Narcyz Konieczny as a plumber's apprentice in June 1941, his boss appealed to Schwalm for backing, though not before going to several labor offices in the Pfalz to try to resolve the matter himself.[81] The support of local SS officers also greatly buoyed the emotional state of incoming candidates and

[78] LOC/NMT, 813-815, Hofmann Defense Doc. 87: "Memorandum for Plant Leaders on the Utilization of Persons Suitable for Re-Germanization" (English transcript), unsigned, September, 1941. There were actually several different versions of this pamphlet.

[79] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/48-51: "Entwurf eines Merkblattes für Betriebsführer," unsigned, undated.

[80] 2/20/10: Kowalska, 10.19.40; 5/32/80: Marchlewska, 5.5.41.

[81] 3/20a/100: Konieczny, 6.18.41.

helped ease their transition. "Herr Grotz has really taken a serious interest in my personal affairs," wrote Johanna Spalko, "For this reason, I like it very much in Stuttgart."[82] Grotz even told young Marie Kondek that she could call him father.[83]

The distribution of foodstuffs gives us another good indication of the hospitality that WED candidates could often expect to enjoy. In the countryside, the standard fare for most consisted of potatoes, bread, and milk allotted as payment in kind, though some overseers indulged their workers with generous portions of pork, chicken, butter, and wine.[84] In the towns and cities, grocers and shopkeepers granted access to a wide assortment of commodities. "One can buy all the necessary things with ration cards," Josef Szykowski attested, "and it is untrue when many say that we can't buy anything." In Munich, Ursula Pudelska feasted regularly on sausage, cheese, oranges, and lemons as well as "all sorts of vegetables and canned goods" and "lots of pies and cakes."[85] Just as important as what they ate was where they ate and who they ate with. For the race and resettlement experts of the SS, fostering personal intimacy with the Betriebsführer and his family through the practice of collective eating, or *Tischgemeinschaft*, constituted one of the most effective vehicles of assimilation. They promoted a kind of "sociology of the meal" in which etiquette, décor, and dinnertime conversation would acquaint subjects with the "German way of life" and activate their latent bonds of "racial kinship."[86] The HSSPFs told proprietors that there were no objections to candidates "sharing a common table with German farmers where it is customary."[87] The re-Germanization adviser in SS-District North Sea, Willy Tensfeld, relayed the same sanction to households in his area of responsibility: "The attempt to Germanize Poles…[means that] they must sit at a common table with German families."[88] Many Germans did indeed break bread with their charges. This was true for Josef Szykowski and his relatives in Heidenheim – "We eat together in the farmer's kitchen and the food is really good"– as well as for the Raczyk family in Naumburg. When short on money in May 1941, Feliks Majerczyk went to his overseer for help; "since then," he recalled, "we eat with my boss."[89]

Beyond the courtesies of their hosts, candidates for re-Germanization often encountered a congenial reception from the general populace as well, villagers, townsfolk, and city-dwellers alike. While Stefan Weimann wrote from the small hamlet of Rosengarten that "Relations with my comrades at work and my neighbors have turned out to complete satisfaction," Barbara Sloderbach posted a letter

[82] 5/35/45: Spalko, 6.23.42.
[83] 5/34/106: Kondek, 4.25.42.
[84] 2/20/102: Bogdan, 12.15.40; 2/20/121: Zbieryski, 8.4.40.
[85] 2/20/129: Szykowski, 8.4.40; 5/36/41: Pudelska, 5.27.41.
[86] See Eva Barlösius, *Soziologie des Essens. Eine sozial- und kulturwissentschaftliche Einführung in die Ernährungsforschung* (Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2011).
[87] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/3-4: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 31, 1940.
[88] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/23: Tensfeld, "Bericht betr. Umwanderung (Umsiedlungsfragen)," October, 1940.
[89] 2/20/18: Szykowski, 9.23.40; 2/20/12: Raczyk, 10.27.40; 5/32/81: Majerczyk, 5.26.41.

from Hamburg telling Schwalm, "We are very pleased here because we are treated well by the people," and Johann Ratajaki and his family were also "well-regarded by the population" in the neighborhood in Dortmund where they lived.[90] Initiates also found that many Germans took civic slogans of neighborliness and mutual aid very seriously. One estate-owner by the name of Alfred Thies distributed Christmas presents to the Cielinski children and "in every respect" cared for the family "in an exemplary fashion." When his six young children caught colds and lay bedridden in the winter of 1941, Jozef Papier was astonished by the devotion shown by the local doctor and hospital nurses who made frequent visits to care for them.[91] He should not have been so surprised. Although German farmers were generally more affluent than their Polish counterparts, the two shared more than enough experiential overlap to keep relations on even keel for the most part.[92] In the countryside, subjects who hailed from rural counties formed close connections with local inhabitants, as evidenced by the photographs they took together. Familiarity with the rhythms and practices of everyday life on the land surely made "acclimatization and sedentarization" in the Reich much easier. Back in Poland, moreover, many of these people had commingled with German-speakers since childhood.[93] A few maintained that they had always been German, or at least had German relatives, which was probably true given the degree of intermarriage in the eastern borderlands.[94]

These kinds of social exchanges were prevalent in urban areas too. Roman Sobkowiak's numerous friends and acquaintances in the town of Ulm are a testament to this as well as an illuminating micro-level portrait of the diverse gamut of personalities that inhabited the Third Reich. Roman knew some die-hard Nazis: Eugen, for instance, who had "a predilection for wearing his Party badge on his jacket," and Heinz, who "spewed forth National socialist ideology," "hated everything non-German," and once approvingly flaunted pictures of a mass execution his brother had brought back with him from the Eastern Front. He also knew more than a few people he considered anti-Nazis: Fritz Bauknecht, a beacon of "moral support" with whom Roman forged "a special trusting relationship," the Hubers, an "amiable and tolerant" family of Socialists who "treated me with warmth and sympathy" by extending regular invitations to their home, and the Königs ("They were no Nazis"), who befriended the Sobkowiak family and let them prepare meals in their kitchen. Then there were others who seemed uninterested in politics yet still offered their hands in amity: the butcher Alois Kneer, Herr Wiedergrün from the grain mill at Urspringtopf, the landlady Frau Müller, the Leichtle family from Münsinger Street, the shoemaker Kohn, the nuns Hepperle and Mergl, and Heinz Körner, a "loving, bright, funny" fifteen year-old half-Jewish

[90] 3/20a/47: Weimann, 3.23.41; 2/20a/95: Sloderbach, 6.7.41; 2/20/181: Ratajaki, 10.13.40.
[91] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 73: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 11, 1941; 5/32/39a: Papier, 3.9.41.
[92] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 279.
[93] Christa Tholander, *Fremdarbeiter 1939 bis 1945. Ausländische Arbeitskräfte in der Zeppelin-Stadt Friedrichshafen* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 89, 85.
[94] 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41; 5/34/77: Wawrzyniak, 3.24.42.

boy who was eventually deported to the concentration camp in Terezín (Theresienstadt).[95] The contents of Roman's social circle would seem to validate the Nazis' paranoia about the detrimental influence of "politically unreliable" citizens. But it also illustrates that people from across the social and political spectrum contributed the re-Germanization process, even if they were opponents of the Nazi regime or totally unaware of the ideology behind the "hunt for good blood." By behaving like decent human beings and making these downtrodden immigrants feel at home in foreign surroundings, they unwittingly advanced the goals of racial consolidation. That is not to say that they necessarily regarded these people as equals, or that their welcoming attitude translated into full acceptance of them as compatriots. But it is clear that building interpersonal relationships with individual Germans encouraged WED candidates to associate themselves with the larger imagined community of the German nation.

A major pattern we find in the letters of re-Germanizables, therefore, is the connection between amicable interactions and active engagement in a type of ethnogenesis, or what anthropologists refer to as "fictive kinship." Conviviality and re-Germanization, it seems, went hand in hand. Along with her husband and daughter, Johanna Palikowska was very happy with her new home in St. Georgen because they all had good jobs and decent housing and dined on "the best food one could have." Yet she also attributed this contentment to her husband's popularity among the locals, which brought him to the attention of the mayor as a potential aspirant for public service. "All the people here are kind," wrote Johanna, "and we consider ourselves very lucky." She thanked the race examiners for "having Germanized me."[96] In fact, many inductees chose not to define themselves as Germans per se, but as people who were "becoming German" or "had been Germanized." Andreas Spychalski, for instance, portrayed himself as "a sincere and honest Germanizable." The recognition of their liminal status ironically nurtured feelings of solidarity, such as when Thomas Wierzbicki asked Künzel to "greet all those in the camp" and pass along the advice that "they should not believe it is as bad as people say," or when Johann Michalak passed on his regards to "all my comrades who came into the camp after me and who are still there."[97] This was also the case for those who met at the Aussenstelle and stayed in contact after their transport to the Reich.[98] Their sense of belonging to a distinctive group exposes how Nazi racial categories could generate a self-perpetuating dynamic that produced concrete identities out of otherwise tenuous affiliations.[99]

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[95] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 48-49, 52, 63-64.

[96] 5/32/84: Palikowski, undated.

[97] 5/35/84: Spychalski, undated; 2/20/143: Wierzbicki, 8.11.40; 2/20/149: Michalak, 9.15.40.

[98] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/37-38: Schwalm to Hofmann, July 22, 1941.

[99] As argued in Doris L. Bergen, "Tenuousness and Tenacity: The 'Volksdeutschen' of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 278.

WED candidates often expressed their eagerness to join the German nation by foregrounding the connection between emotionally supportive relationships and linguistic assimilation. Johann Srednicki linked his effort to learn the German language to his appreciation of the communal atmosphere in Grossrafhausen: "The people here are very decent and honest. One helps the other with the work." Kastelan Kazimiera likewise credited his nearly fluent proficiency to sympathetic neighbors.[100] Sometimes members of the host family put on the teacher's hat or set aside several hours a week for their guests to learn. Konieczny's boss even arranged for him to take lessons with a language tutor, with whom he spent "every free minute."[101] The act of speaking itself could stimulate an elated spirit of accomplishment. "Whenever we can muster a word of German," exclaimed Marie Smulska, "we are proud as peacocks. We are not sure if abominable stupidity comes out. We are just glad that we can say something."[102] At the same time, it could also become a pretext for disavowing former countrymen and presenting oneself as a "race-minded" German. Reminding Dongus that "In the camp you told us that it is forbidden to talk to the Poles," Jan Bieganski applied for a transfer "to a region where there are no Poles" because "I want to learn German, but where there are Poles to be found, I cannot learn German." Nikolai Fornalczyk did the same: "Here I work among fifty Poles and twenty-four of the Russian horde. I want to learn German, not Russian." Andreas Spychalski went so far as to provoke an argument with his employer and berate him for hiring "inferior" laborers. "It is impossible to stay here," he remonstrated, "because I work only with rowdy Poles and Russians."[103]

This kind of chauvinism and self-segregation may have functioned as compensatory device, a way of forgetting or repressing one's national background and biographical memories. Some candidates also seem to have gotten caught up in a cycle of what psychologists refer to as trauma bonding (popularly known as Stockholm Syndrome) – a coping mechanism that leads captives to sympathize with the outlook of their captors as a means of dealing with the sudden psychological shock of dependence and subordination and maintaining a sense of dignity and control over their fate. At any rate, it is evident that many candidates readily assumed the mantle of the "master race," performing what theorist Homi Bhabha termed mimesis or mimicry – a phenomenon wherein subaltern colonial peoples aped the attitudes and behaviors of their white overlords so as to ingratiate themselves and secure a privileged status.[104] Imitation, of course, is a form of flattery, and the race examiners were quite pleased to hear that the WED instilled candidates with "the necessary elite consciousness… that befits an imperial state and people."[105]

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[100] 2/20/218: Srednicki, 12.8.40; 5/32/101: Kazimiera, 6.21.41.
[101] 3/20a/100: Konieczny, 6.18.41.
[102] 32/20/36: Smulska, 11.4.40.
[103] 5/33/85: Bieganski, 10.41; 5/35/51: Fornalczyk, 6.28.42; 5/35/84: Spychalski, undated.
[104] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture*, ed. Homi Bhabha (New York; Routledge, 1994), 121-131.
[105] BDC SSO/097B: Scholtz to Bach dem Zelewski, May 12, 1941.

Whereas acculturation signaled contentment with the social milieu, WED candidates also responded passionately to the landscape. In urban settings, they were enthralled with architectural and cultural landmarks; Pudelska's infatuation with the "wonderful" cathedrals, parks, museums, monuments, and other "attractions" in the "masterly city" of Munich is a good example of this. It was the splendor of the countryside, however, that most of them wrote about. Sometimes their enthusiasm centered on man-made features, such as the "orderliness" of German farms. Johann Bogdan let it be known that the "well-cultivated land" on his employer's estate gave him "joy and desire to help with the farming."[106] He and others composed passionate descriptions the terrain and the blissful emotions it evoked. "If one must know," confided Stanislaw Janas, "it is delightful to rove around the mountains here. The human being in me is not use to this, but now I can humor myself." In addition to a pleasurable diversion, picturesque scenery afforded an excellent chance to get to know the locals. While reflecting on the "beautiful hills and forests" of the Palatinate, Konieczny noted that "Here one can go for a stroll and have lovely conversations." For Alexandra Dabrowska, the environs around Rexingen became a topic of discussion that brought her closer to the townspeople: "It is a small village deep in the valley, ringed by forests, so I often go for walks in the sunshine of the early morning hours and take in the beauty of nature. I talk about the 'beauty of nature' with the people who live here… and they admire me for being so enraptured."[107]

The combined effect of the ideological, cultural, and environmental elements of re-Germanization proved compelling enough to engender the type of transformation envisioned by the Nazis, potent enough to convince subjects to renounce any and all previous attachments to the Polish nation and dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the German *Volk*. Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the Re-Germanization Procedure is that with many people it seems to have worked. Marie Smulska, for instance, documented a telling changeover in November 1940: "Our employers are angels and we had no idea that Germans could be so nice. Do not take this the wrong way, but I had heard so many bad things about them that I did not personally know to be true. I have now totally changed my mind."[108] Other candidates recounted a similar conversion. "The local people are polite and straightforward," Wladyslaw Adamczyk opined, "and I am now convinced that brotherly love prevails among the German people." Siegmund Marchlewski and his siblings expressed their gratitude to the SS for the opportunity to "become German again and work in our fatherland." "We want to be German until death," he vowed. Josef Frakowiak also thanked Schwalm "for everything you have done for me and my family"; because their employer was "good and caring," Josef and his relatives wanted to "stay in Germany forever." He closed his letter "With German greetings."[109] Re-Germanization could instill feelings of patriotic euphoria too – "It is

[106] 5/36/41: Pudelska, 5.27.41; 2/20/102: Bogdan, 12.15.40.
[107] 2/20/29: Janas, 8.23.40; 3/20a/100: Konieczny, 6.18.41; 5/35/78: Dabrowski, 9.11.42.
[108] 2/20/36: Smulska, 11.4.40.
[109] 5/31/87: Adamczak, 12.26.40; 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41; 5/32/32: Frakowiak, 2.23.41.

wonderful here, magical," Smulska exalted, "We jump to the ceiling with joy" – and candidates channeled these emotions in various ways. Some articulated pro-German sentiment in declarations of support for the Nazi New Order. Janas presented himself as a "faithful servant of your empire" and Adamczak concluded a letter in late December 1941 by "wish[ing] the German people a joyous and victorious new year." A few even stated they were willing to accept martyrdom as the price for membership in the "ethnic community." On April 19, 1942, young Konstantin Celinski penned the following words to Dongus at the RuSHA Aussenstelle: "I wonder if it would be possible for me to join the army as a volunteer. I am longing to sacrifice my life for the German fatherland… I do not yet truly belong to the German nation, so I want to do as much as possible to serve the great and glorious Germany. I see this as my sole purpose in life. I will give up everything for it."[110]

It would be foolish to take these effusive outbursts of Germanophilia at face value. We must be mindful, as WED candidates undoubtedly were, of the military situation during the period between the spring of 1940 and the spring of 1942 – a time when the Nazis rapidly overran the continent of Europe and established a dominion stretching from the English Channel to the Caspian Sea, their position virtually unassailable, their triumph seemingly assured. Many deportees who opted for re-Germanization almost certainly thought they had chosen the winning side. They also seem to have been consciously telling Himmler's minions exactly what they thought these men wanted to hear, casting themselves in a light they believed would assure the continued patronage and protection of the SS. The vast majority of them did not fit the profile of anti-German "renegades," for they repeatedly affirmed their fidelity to the German *Volk* while conveying a desire to accept the benefits and obligations of German citizenship. At the very least, WED candidates became adept at outwardly playing the part of loyal "ethnic comrades" and committed National Socialists. They often chose to Germanize their first names, even though they did not have to; thus, Zygmunt Marchlewski became Siegmund Marchlewski and Zdzislaw Lorek became Franz Lorek.[111] In addition to that, their letters almost always closed with "Heil Hitler!" To all appearances, they tried their best to live up to the Nazis' stereotypical definitions of Germanness, which they must have learned either from the Eignungsprüfer or local Party activists. The programmatic wording of their accounts, especially when discussing foreign laborers or the German landscape, echoed the rhetoric of National Socialism in a number of key respects. Still, the letters cannot simply be written off as pure subterfuge. They suggest that on some level these people internalized the conceptual categories of their SS overlords and may have truly believed they were "of German blood." Their attempts to "act German" must therefore be interpreted as genuine practices of self-identification and authentic expressions of emotional belonging as well as pragmatic strategies of survival.

[110] 5/34/96: Celinski, 4.19.42.

[111] 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41; 3/20a/85: Lorek, 5.3.41. They could not Germanize their last names because the SS used these for registration purposes and changes would have led to all kinds of administrative problems.

Whatever their reasoning or actual motivation, the managers of the WED interpreted positive testimony as an unambiguous sign that candidates had come to identify themselves as members of the "Nordic race" – in short, as evidence that the Re-Germanization Procedure was working. In forming this conclusion, they drew not only on the letters, but on the activity and mood reports compiled by the Gestapo, which substantiated the model behavior of re-Germanizable Poles as well as the camaraderie that developed between them and their German custodians. According to the mayor of Hattenbach, Felicja Nizielski had "comported herself very well during her stay in the municipality," and the mayor of Hersfeld vouched that Marjan Brzozowski was "hard-working and enthusiastic" and "eager to learn the German language."[112] After stopping by the farm of Otto Faust in September 1941, a gendarme in Grossenlüder reported to the Landrat of Fulda that the four members of the Lamcha family were "in all respects industrious, upright, and honest"; he could raise no red flags because "the persons have never made anti-German statements." Otto Faust, the gendarme claimed, "offers the assurance that the Lamcha family will be educated in the ways of the German peasant."[113] That same month, Dörhöfer likewise confirmed that Martin Behne, who oversaw the Orzechowski family, "makes great efforts to bring the family into Germandom." [114] The following month, he predicted that the subjects living with Alfred Thies would become "full-fledged Germans" in a year due to his "good supervision."[115] The head of the gendarmerie in Weyher was equally optimistic; he observed that Mieczyslaw Rachkowski, his wife, and his son "behave well, are diligent and useful on the farm, and are properly immersing themselves in the ethnic community […*führen sich gut in die Volksgemeinschaft ein*]."[116] By the summer of 1941, Hofmann could justifiably brag to colleagues that "The results of this procedure have so far been very good."[117]

Integration was not just a matter of sociability alone, however; it was a matter of class and taste, which is why the SS strove mightily to provide initiates with a "German standard of living" that corresponded to their "racial worth."[118] In a striking parallel with the agrarian ideology colonial administrators had once promoted among yeoman farmers in German Southwest Africa, Himmler's race and resettlement experts believed that successfully tilling a plot of farmland and raising livestock automatically endowed people with the income, qualities, and reputation necessary to be a solid representative of Germandom.[119] The Re-Germanization Procedure, therefore, had a crucial socio-economic dimension, and WED candidates, their heads filled with inflated images of Germany as the land

[112] HStM 180 Hersfeld, Nr. A 2772: Landrat Hersfeld to Gestapo Kassel, October 14, 1941.
[113] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 40: Gendarmerie Grossenlüder to Landrat Fulda, September 25, 1941.
[114] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 57: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 10, 1941.
[115] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 67: Dörhöfer to 20. Luftgau-Nachrichten-Regiment., October 20, 1941.
[116] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 282: Gendarmerie Weyhers to Landrat Fulda, June 15, 1942.
[117] BA NS 2/45/160-161: Hofmann to Körbel, June 9, 1941.
[118] Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg – Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg (=StL) K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[119] On the remarkable similarities shared by these two widely disparate contexts, see Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and Settler Identities in Namibia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), 28-29.

of milk and honey, picked up on this linkage between racial belonging and material culture almost immediately. The letters detail a performative process of identity formation – what French sociological theorist Pierre Bourdieu referred to as habitus – wherein re-Germanizable Poles attempted to define themselves and their position in society through self-presentation and lifestyle choices, by designing their social space through banal phenomena such as housing, furniture, fashion, and other "elective affinities" that bring people together and keep them apart.[120] The success of these endeavors, however, depended on the extent to which Germans embraced them as members of a common polity and shared realm of obligation. The habitus of re-Germanization, in other words, operated according to an interplay of daily living conditions, personal relationships, and popular understandings of race and ethnicity, a dialectic that the Nazi regime fostered in all the ways it sought to make these people "the same as any other German."

The workings of this process were already discernible during the resettlement of candidates from Łódź to the Reich. They usually traveled in groups of ten to twenty families, initially sent off by the RuSHA (sometimes with a bit fanfare), shortly thereafter by the Labor Ministry, which purchased their tickets and even paid for drinks during the trip. The RuSHA insisted that the transport manifests "should never speak of 'Polish families,' but rather of 'Germanizable' families," and the Aussenstelle appointed a special envoy to accompany each cohort, in large part because they had to share a compartment with "pure" Polish laborers, but also to deal with government agencies on the way.[121] According to one inductee, the chaperon for SS-District Southwest, a certain Bandig, "went through the greatest trouble to look after our well-being."[122] The use of these escorts also preserved an unbroken chain of custody between the RuSHA and the RNS. Upon arrival, they handed over candidates to the local Kreisbauernführer or his deputy, who usually ushered them straight to their designated workplace, though sometimes their employers retrieved them, and on a few occasions they met first with the HSSPFs, whom one letter described as "very friendly."[123] The host then had to sign for each re-Germanizable employee on registry forms that the Kreisbauernführer and the labor offices initialed and submitted to the RKF Staff Main Office in Berlin.[124] Transportation and deployment still did not proceed as smoothly as Greifelt would have liked, however. According to Dr. Berthold Bethge, another leading RKF consultant, in October 1940 many NSV offices had still not undertaken to supply food and lodging during stopovers. The following July, it turned out that some overseers did not actually have room for incoming re-Germanizables. The Labor Ministry refused to pay for temporary accommodations, so the HSSPFs had to

[120] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 13, 184, 192, 202, 213, 241, 253.

[121] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940; USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/5: Beisiegel to Landesarbeitsämter, July 15, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/26-27: "Aktenaufzeichnung über die Mitteilungen des SS-Stf. Dr. Seitz," unsigned, June 21, 1940.

[122] 5/35/76-77: Chybinski, 9.11.42.

[123] BA R 3601/2365/1: Haidn to Landesbauernschaften, June 19, 1940; 5/34/59: Urbanski, 2.27.42.

[124] BA NS 2/160/9: "Laufkarte zur Einsetzung wiedereindeutschungsfähiger Familien," undated.

make use of transit camps, hostels, shelters, and workhouses in the meantime.[125] WED candidates whom the RuSHA sent to Württemberg, for instance, usually spent a brief stint in the resettlement compound (*Umsiedlungslager*) in Schelklingen bei Ulm, a former Catholic orphanage and convent the SS had impounded in the summer of 1940.[126]

First and foremost, the material component of re-Germanization required quarters that "outwardly demonstrate the orderly conditions prevailing in Germany" in contrast to the "typically primitive housing conditions in the former Polish territories."[127] In this regard, some proprietors went above and beyond the call of duty. Stanislawa Geloch, a young woman dispatched to rural Brandenburg, resided in "a lovely house, covered in greenery, with a balcony and a park." In Lippe, Stefan Weimann moved into "a spacious flat with beautiful fruit gardens," while Franz Lorek inhabited "a gorgeous house" with two rooms, a kitchen, and a cellar, as well as a barn. Josef Szykowski relayed the news from Heidenheim that "We have received what we were promised. Three furnished bedrooms with electric lighting in all of them."[128] At least a few re-Germanizables showed no qualms at all about profiting at the expense of the Nazis' "racial enemies." "Thanks to the tireless efforts of Herr Obersturmführer Grotz," Alexander Chybinski was able to procure "a formerly Jewish apartment with three rooms in a so-called 'twin home,'" which greatly eased his family's "'stabilization' in beautiful Swabia.""[129]

As this incident suggests, however, many Betriebsführer did not live up to their end of the bargain. A huge proportion of candidates lived in run-down single-room dwellings with no electricity, plumbing, or heating, and some of them slept in barns, sheds, or stables alongside farm animals. From Damendorf in Schleswig-Holstein, Jan Pluskota depicted his domicile as follows: "In the anteroom there is no ceiling and the floors are covered in straw. The wallpaper has been torn to shreds and the rooms are unbelievably dirty."[130] Re-Germanizable Poles often occupied outbuildings that were literally falling apart. Ignacy Zelazek's hut had "large holes in the door and in the walls" and a ceiling on the verge of collapse, and the Grzoskowiak family was stuck in a room where pieces of plaster fell on their heads from above.[131] Siegmund Marchlewski saw these circumstances as an affront to his newly christened racial status: "The farmhouse is so damp that the walls crumble. No German man could live in this farmhouse. When my aunt came to visit, she said 'My pig has a better stall than you.'"[132] Given that they were usually assigned dilapidated summer homes meant for seasonal workers, their letters are filled with

[125] BA R 49/73/48-49: Bethge to HSSPFs, July 7, 1941.
[126] Jörg Martin, "Das Umsiedlungslager Schelklingen 1941-1945," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 51, Ulm und Oberschwaben (2000): 231-248.
[127] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/48-51: "Entwurf eines Merkblattes für Betriebsführer," unsigned, undated.
[128] 5/35/46: Geloch, 6.25.42; 3/20a/47: Weimann, 3.23.41; 3/20a/85: Lorek, 5.3.41; 2/20/44: Szykowski, 8.4.40.
[129] 5/35/76-77: Chybinski, 9.11.42.
[130] 3/20a/103: Pijanowski, 6.26.41; 2/20/94: Pluskota, 12.8.40.
[131] 2/20/72: Zelazek, 7.1.40; 3/20a/67: Grzoskowiak 5.21.41.
[132] 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41.

worries about what would happen come winter. When winter did come, they had to endure the elements, even when frost began to form on the walls or snow fell directly into their homes. "How can one sleep in a room covered with snow?" Josef Stepnik asked. Due to the ramshackle state of their abode, the children of Jozefa Rybinska had to "sit all day among the cattle; otherwise they would have frozen long ago."[133] One letter from Antoni Pawlak likewise illustrates how the callousness and duplicity of some Betriebsführer stifled anticipations of fair treatment:

> Nothing has improved for us since the visit by the commission [of Herr Grotz]. It is so cold in the house that none of us can bear it and the landlord does not want to hear about a furnace…We have only one room, which is in terrible condition… We have already been here for three months and have had no time to make our beds and clean our boots. Yet before the commission came here, the landlord said we had to make our beds and scrub the floor.[134]

We will recall that Nazi security forces had almost completely dispossessed these people in the course of evicting them from their homes back in Poland. They arrived in the Reich only with what they could carry in a few suitcases and sometimes with nothing but the clothes on their backs, since labor officials often lost their luggage or accidentally shipped it to the General Government.[135] In any event, they were utterly dependent for furniture and appliances on their German caretakers, some of whom were more than willing to help out. One farmer donated six beds, two tables, one cabinet, and several chairs to the family staying on his farm, which Dörhöfer praised as "among the best in my area."[136] The supervisors of Jozef Wasilewski prepared "everything that one needs for a household," and the Marchlewska's two-room cottage in Nordhausen was outfitted with beds, chairs, cabinets, a stove, and other accoutrements. Pluskota kept a meticulous catalogue of the items bequeathed to him: beds, chairs, a sofa, a cabinet, a kitchenette, blankets, pillows, towels, plates, cups, and cutlery.[137] In this respect as well, however, many of the Betriebsführer failed to abide by SS guidelines. They often handed down old, decrepit furniture that was either barely serviceable or completely broken, and sometimes they gave little to nothing at all. The family of Jan Kania got only straw and horse-blankets, and that of Konstanty Przybyla was forced to sleep four people to a bed. "We have not received what you promised us," Leona Kwapicz complained, "The apartment is without furniture except for a few wretched beds." Theodor Zielinski, writing from Kiel in March 1941, grumbled that his furnishings were "insufficient for human life."[138] WED candidates were also usually deprived of small household items like bedding, linens,

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[133] 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40; 5/32/21: Sliwinski, 1.27.41; 5/32/11: Stepnik, 1.12.41; 5/31/91: Rybinska, 12.40.
[134] 2/20/15: Pawlak, 10.28.40.
[135] Isabel Heinemann, '*Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut': Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 297-298.
[136] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 73: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 11, 1941; NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 72: Dörhöfer to Arbeitsamt Uelzen, September 23, 1941.
[137] 3/20a/87: Wasilewski, 6.6.41; 5/32/80: Marchlewska, 5.5.41; 2/20/94: Pluskota, 12.8.40.
[138] 2/20/5: Kania, 11.26.40; 2/20/62: Przybyla, 7.13.40; 5/31/19: Kwapicz, 8.5.40; 3/20a/54: Zielinski, 3.31.41.

kitchen utensils, toiletries, tools, and thread.[139] All of these objects not only had the obvious practical purposes; they also operated as status symbols and markers of racial privilege. Andreas Spychalski spoke to this connection when he vented his outrage that "the Poles here each have a bed and a blanket, yet we have only five beds and three blankets for nine people."[140]

The clothing situation was even worse. Bethge observed in October 1940 that "the Germanizables often lack work clothes, because they only brought their Sunday attire or were unable to take more with them during the evacuation." It was also not unusual for the police to rob them of their best garb during their "evacuation."[141] By decree of the Reich Economics Ministry, each candidate was supposed to get vouchers for clothing and shoes with the full amount of points, and some of them did – "just like other German ethnic comrades," Marcel Wawrzyniak commented.[142] In many cases, however, government officials refused to hand over these coupons to re-Germanizables. After repeated entreaties to local welfare offices fell through, Adam Dudaczyk demanded that Künzel "notify the mayor here that he should give me some ration cards so my family and I can buy something, because we have nothing to wear."[143] The Betriebsführer themselves usually only delivered discarded articles of summer clothing that often did not fit, and some neglected to provide even this. "It is very cold here," Jan Zochniak noted, "and we walk around barefoot because the boss says there are no shoes for us Poles."[144] Others deliberately worsened the plight of re-Germanizables by withholding their vouchers, presumably to spend the points on themselves or their family members. This happened to Murjanna Znajcek – "when a card comes from the Labor Office, he [the landlord] keeps it hidden from me" – as well as the family of Stanislaw Stanczak: "We asked the Herr for our ration cards, but he doesn't want to hear it."[145] Even if they did manage to bring along enough clothes and shoes, the rigors of agricultural labor quickly ruined them, leaving candidates to "roam around in rags," as Wladyslaw Potasiak put it.[146]

In letter after letter, inductees deployed another particular turn of phrase: they claimed they were "barefoot and naked."[147] Though clearly a rhetorical device and not a literal or accurate representation, the use of this expression by a number of individuals is nonetheless revealing. Their disheveled appearance visibly distinguished them from Germans and hindered their attempts to fit in. Zelazek implored Künzel to "help us in our poverty… so that we can at least look a little bit like human beings in our own home." "We are differentiated from the local Germans," Feliks Majerczyk perceived, "not only because we do

[139] BA R 49/73/11-12: Greifelt to HSSPFs, December 5, 1940.
[140] 5/35/84: Spychalski, undated.
[141] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.
[142] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/26: Funk, "Rundschreiben Nr. 654/40 BWA," November 1, 1940; 3/20a/27: Wawrzyniak, 2.3.41.
[143] 5/31/30: Dudaczyk, 8.11.40.
[144] 3/20a/54: Zielinski, 3.31.41; 2/20/158-159: Zochniak, 9.15.40.
[145] 3/20a/269: Znajcek, undated; 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40.
[146] 3/20a/83: Potasiak, 5.13.41.
[147] 5/31/48-49: Kwapicz, 9.15.40; 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40; 2/20/214: Perdek, 12.2.40.

not speak German, but because of our poor clothing."[148] For former Polish nationals seeking to become Germans, dress, like housing and material goods, became a self-conscious material attribute of race, an index of social and cultural capital without which the assimilation process could not function. In direct violation of orders from above, apparatchiks in the provinces often accentuated this distinction by forcing them to don the badge for "pure" Polish Wanderarbeiter. "We were told in the camp," Potasiak reminded Schwalm, "that we would be treated like Germans and would not have to wear the P… However, a policeman here looked through our papers and said that we do have to wear the P." "We were told not to interact with Poles and not to wear the P," Marchlewski griped, "but here every Pole wears the 'P.'"[149]

Faced with such woefully impoverished conditions, WED candidates frequently asked their benefactors at the Aussenstelle when they could collect former belongings or commensurate financial compensation. Johann Zbieryski sought to retrieve "some clothing from our home, because we work with cattle, our clothes quickly get dirty, and we have only been able to wash them once." Josef Frakowiak wanted Schwalm to send over his furniture since his new landlord had only given him "the bare essentials on loan." Indignant because he had "only acquired defective and broken things," Konstantin Kaminski petitioned the RuSHA to return a number of personal effects, from sheets, shoes, and clothing to silverware, clocks, and mementos from Prince August-Wilhelm of Prussia, son of the last Kaiser. Another veteran of the imperial German army, Franciszek Zielinski, openly harped on his military service in the hope of attaining "furniture, beds, clothing, and everything one needs for domestic life, because it is all still in my home."[150] A young farmer named Thaddäus L. gave voice to the feelings of distress and abandonment that motivated these supplications: "I thought that it was a right and an obligation to preserve the livelihood of those of us who were screened in Łódź and allow us to lead a regular life. We have been selected and will probably one day become German citizens, yet our property has been seized by the German state. What do we have today? What kind of rights? What awaits us?"[151]

The race examiners had indeed held out the possibility of restitution as an inducement for deportees to join the Re-Germanization Procedure as well as logged summaries of the property they commandeered from each subject.[152] But the unstated assumption was that reimbursement would not occur until after they had successfully completed their term of probation. The recovery of confiscated possessions was out of the question; as a rule, the SS handed these things over to ethnic Germans. As Höppner explained to Ehlich in February 1941, "The fulfillment of this desire is impossible because the

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[148] 2/20/72: Zelazek, 7.1.40; 5/32/81: Majerczyk, 5.26.41.
[149] 3/20a/83: Potasiak, 5.13.41; 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41.
[150] 2/20/121: Zbieryski, 8.4.40; 5/32/32: Frakowiak, 2.23.41; 3/20a/79: Kaminski, 5.14.41; 5/32/90: Zielinski, 6.7.41.
[151] Quoted from Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 295.
[152] Gerhard Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien und ökonomische Zwänge. Die rassischen Selektionen polnischer Arbeitskräfte durch die SS in den Lagern der Umwandererzentralstelle," in *Nationalsozialistische Lager. Neue Beiträge zur NS-Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik und zur Gedenkstättenpädogogik*, eds. Akim Jah, Christoph Kopke, and Alexander Korb (Münster: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2006), 138-139.

re-Germanizable Poles are initially evicted just like every other Pole. Their property has already been given to the resettlers and for the most part probably cannot be located now."[153] The HSSPF in the Rhineland clarified the matter for the Landrat of Limburg in similar terms: "In order to give ethnic German resettlers from foreign states the possibility for settlement in the newly incorporated territories, the re-Germanizable families have to leave behind their home or farm and all of their belongings. This makes it necessary to equip re-Germanizable persons accordingly so that from the outset the Germanization process is not disturbed."[154]

The managers of the Re-Germanization Procedure did not just sit by idly and let these "bearers of lost German blood" fend for themselves, however. On January 27, 1941, Dongus sent NSV officials in Łódź a list of families whose baggage had gone missing and asked them replace the lost articles (particularly blankets) "because the families are totally without means."[155] Three days later, he wrote to the labor office in Kolmar to request beds and pillows for WED candidates in Westphalia.[156] Sometimes RuSHA personnel at the Aussenstelle even tried to track down misplaced luggage upon request. Barbara Sloderbach thanked Schwalm on one occasion for having "settled the matter so that my mother could have her things back and we could get our clothes and so forth."[157] In December 1940, Ignacy Lepczyk solicited the race examiners to find his child's stroller; they were still looking for it four months later.[158] To say the least, this behavior certainly does not tally with our archetypal image of the heartless, bloodthirsty SS officer, though it does reveal the inordinate amount of energy these men devoted to helping a relatively small circle of favored foreign subjects. Such time-consuming methods, in any case, made it clear that the RKF would have to come up with more efficient remedies. After meeting with families in Württemberg and Austria in October 1940, Bethge recommended that the police instruct deportees to pack work clothes and boots before their eviction. He also advocated supplying re-Germanizables from stockpiles in the UWZ camps and letting the ethnic Germans who occupied their houses mail them what they had to leave behind.[159] On December 5, 1940, in the wake of numerous complaints "that Germanizable Poles arrive without the necessary clothing, shoes, linens, and bedding," Greifelt acted on this advice and ordered the UWZ "to ensure that evacuated Poles are given an opportunity to bring the necessary things with them," especially considering that "The procurement of

[153] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/34-35: Höppner to Ehlich, February 1, 1941.
[154] Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (=HStW) Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 970-971: Berkelmann to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, September 4, 1942.
[155] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/122: Dongus to NSV Litzmannstadt, January 27, 1941.
[156] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/157: Dongus to Arbeitsamt Kolmar, January 30, 1941.
[157] 3/20a/95: Sloderbach, 6.7.41.
[158] 2/20/172: Lepczyk, 10.3.40; USHMMA 15.021M/2/20/195: "Bemerkung der Aussenstelle," unsigned, January 18, 1941.
[159] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.

replacements is very difficult with the current shortage of raw materials."[160] Several weeks later, Fähndrich directed the HSSPFs to have candidates specify items that remained in their old homes and get in touch with the UWZ, who would contact administrative offices in Poland in the areas where they originated so as "to determine whether clothing and bedding which is not being used there can be released and remitted to the Germanizable Poles."[161]

All of these solutions turned out to be pretty much futile. Although it seems that Greifelt's intervention did subsequently enable outgoing re-Germanizables to take larger amounts of luggage, one could not reasonably expect the police to prescribe what their victims packed amid the chaos and brutality of the deportations.[162] It was even more unrealistic to assume that ethnic German resettlers – who had themselves arrived in Poland with practically nothing – would give up their recently gained comforts, or to suppose that officials in the incorporated eastern territories would compel them to do so or part ways with materiel from their own stores. The SS tried to keep their problem-solving in house by continuing the cycle of expropriation, robbing one group of people to provide for another. The idea of requisitioning the property of murdered "racial enemies" emerged quite early on. In July 1940, Greifelt authorized the appropriation of furniture from deceased welfare recipients, most likely victims of the Nazi euthanasia campaign.[163] While Roman Sobkowiak strongly suspected that the clothing deposited for incoming subjects in the attic of the Umsiedlungslager in Schelklingen came from dead concentration camp inmates, Alexander Chybinski and his family admitted that they had "obtained furniture and other items from Jewish assets, so now we have firm ground under our feet."[164]

If SS officers truly wanted to ensure the material well-being of WED candidates, they would have to exert pressure on the welfare agencies of Party and state and impel them to comply with Himmler's wishes. In theory, re-Germanizables were supposed to earn their keep through independent farming and animal husbandry, through endowments of livestock and *Deputatland* – land temporarily allotted to a farmhand for personal cultivation as payment in kind – which would "advance their acclimatization and sedentarization" and "form a close-knit bond with the workplace."[165]Alfred Thies, for instance, set aside a small plot of land for the Cielinski family and purchased two pigs for their sustenance.[166] But most farmers were either unable or unwilling to accede to such bequests, especially since the SS never specified a fixed period of indenture. "We were supposed to get a pig-pen but we haven't," Bryczak lamented, "We were supposed to have an acre for a garden, but we got only a few meters for vegetables.

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[160] BA R 49/73/11-12: Greifelt to HSSPFs, December 5, 1940.
[161] BA R 49/73/15-16: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, December 20, 1940.
[162] USHMMA 15.021M/6/46/3: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, September 14, 1941.
[163] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940.
[164] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 55; 5/35/76-77: Chybinski, 9.11.42.
[165] StS Wü 168 T2, Nr. 207: Kaul, "Betriebsführer-Merkblatt für den Einsatz wiedereindeutschungsfähiger Personen," undated.
[166] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 73: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 11, 1941.

We also have no potato field."[167] In July 1940, therefore, Greifelt prevailed upon the Labor Ministry to extend to each family a one-time subsidy of six hundred Reichsmark (RM) for the purchase of land, animals, seeds, and farming equipment.[168] In September, however, it was the NSV Main Office that consented to shoulder the cost of these "work credits" as well as cover funds for other products.[169] In at least some instances, agents of the NSV did dole out financial assistance, furniture, and clothing to WED candidates.[170] For the most part though, they dragged their feet. Three NSV social workers visited Johann Bogdan in the fall of 1940, for example, making all kinds of promises, yet never returned or followed through, leaving the family bereft of essentials. "Perhaps Santa Claus will bring them next year," he joked mordantly.[171] Already in October 1940, Bethge had to inform the RuSHA that "the subsidy of 600 RM for livestock and agricultural equipment cannot be issued by the NSV for technical reasons."[172] While the agency still agreed to pay for furnishings and household items, actual cooperation on this front also proved difficult to enforce. In light of frequent obstruction, the NSDAP leadership reassured Greifelt in December 1940 that "All Gau office chiefs have been instructed to provide sufficiently for Germanizable Poles" and vowed to intercede "should they refuse to perform this kind of service."[173]

By that point, it was obvious that SS technocrats would have to seek other sources of funding; they could not rely on the welfare agencies of the Nazi Party alone, but nor did they necessarily have to. Though the labor offices usually attempted to pass the buck onto the NSV, they were obliged to dispense "work credits" in accordance with existing statutes for the financial support of German agricultural laborers.[174] After considerable delay, Reich Minister of Labor Seldte commanded all subordinate offices on December 6, 1940 to disburse up to six hundred RM to re-Germanizable families upon application in order to "create a possibility for their livelihood in the Reich."[175] His edict did little good, however, because underlings in the provinces still exercised substantial latitude over determining the amount of the subsidies, not to mention whether they would disburse them at all. The decree was problematic for other reasons too: it applied only to families and did not cover unmarried individuals, and it forbade the issuance of funds for special work clothing and footwear – precisely what candidates often needed most. Furthermore, the Betriebsführer had to certify requests and the labor offices apportioned the money to them, not to the applicants.[176]

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[167] 2/20/214: Perdek, 12.2.40; 3/20a/8: Bryczak, 1.12.41.
[168] USHMMA 15.015M/4/259/11-13: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 3, 1940.
[169] BA R 59/46/1: Althaus to NSV Gauamtsleiter, September 4, 1940.
[170] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 108: Dörhöfer to Pancke, November 15, 1940; 5/36/41: Pudelska, 5.27.41.
[171] 2/20/102: Bogdan, 12.15.40.
[172] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.
[173] BA R 49/73/14: Hilgenfeldt to Greifelt, December 16, 1940.
[174] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/15-17: Greifelt to Hofmann, October 9, 1940.
[175] BA R 49/73/13: Seldte to Landesarbeitsämter, December 6, 1940.
[176] StS Wü 168 T2, Nr. 207: Kaul, "4. Anweisung für Einsatzstellen eindeutschungsfähiger Polen," January 9, 1941; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 195: Graff to Landrat Fulda, April 1, 1941.

The Interior Ministry also pledged monetary support for re-Germanizable Poles through the welfare departments of the Landräte and Bürgermeister, yet once again actual cooperation on the ground was less than forthcoming, since guidelines entrusted the lower echelons of the civil administration with deciding "the type and extent of public welfare."[177] Municipal agencies could therefore assert their autonomy and exploit loopholes to evade accountability. In February 1941, the head of the welfare office for the Landrat in Heiligenstadt took it for granted that war invalids did not meet the prerequisites since they did not work in agriculture, until the local chairman of the German Council of Municipalities, Erich Preiser, reprimanded him: "All that matters is whether the family has been recognized as capable of re-Germanization by the Reichsführer-SS. This cannot be questioned."[178] That same month, however, Preiser himself took advantage of the absence of specific parameters for repayment to deny aid altogether. "If these Poles believe they are entitled to compensation from the Reich," he contended, "then this cannot be opposed sharply enough. It is totally unjustified to free Poles from the obligation of repayment… In my opinion, the decree of the Reich Minister of the Interior… gives the welfare agencies ample leeway [*Spielraum*]."[179] Local civil servants also tried to shift the financial burden onto others. The head of the welfare office in Frankfurt am Main argued that the Labor Ministry should bear the expenses because district coffers were tapped out, even though the Interior Ministry licensed subordinates to request additional capital should their own funds come up short: "The order of the Reichsführer-SS for the treatment of Germanizable Poles cannot be observed if only the principles of general welfare apply to their care."[180] This intransigence did not abate with time either. In May 1941, the Labor Ministry again had to remind state welfare departments to produce "work credits" for WED candidates.[181] But it was standard operating procedure for Nazi officials first to ascertain what the Betriebsführer could contribute; as much as possible, they tried to saddle them with the responsibility of providing for re-Germanizable Pole, which naturally aroused the ire of civilian overseers. As one SD officer in Württemberg scoffed, "One cannot speak of an ethnic community… for the farmer, his own property is his only fatherland."[182]

Rather than securing a "German standard of living" for "bearers of lost German blood," the machinations of the SS incited a rancorous and protracted conflict with the other arms of the National Socialist regime. How do we explain this semi-covert resistance? Why were so many Betriebsführer and provincial administrators so reluctant to bestow WED candidates with the most basic necessities of

[177] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/12-13: Conti to Bezirksfürsorgeverbände, December 23, 1940.
[178] BA R 36/1052/22: Bezirksfürsorgeverband Heiligenstadt to Preiser, February 20, 1941; BA R 36/1052/23: Preiser to Bezirksfürsorgeverband Heiligenstadt, March 4, 1941.
[179] BA R 36/1052/20: Preiser to Oberbürgermeister Frankfurt am Main, February 1941
[180] BA R 36/1052/19: Fürsorgeamt Frankfurt am Main to Preiser, January 20, 1941.
[181] BA R 36/1052/31: Hölk to Deutscher Gemeindetag Berlin, May 7, 1941.
[182] Quoted from Jill Stephenson, "Germans, Slavs, and the Burden of Work in Rural Southern Germany during the Second World War," in *Nazism, War, and Genocide: New Perspectives on the History of the Third Reich*, ed. Neil Gregor (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 95.

everyday life? For one thing, each of these welfare institutions presided over scarce resources in a time of total war and would not casually give them up. As one Landrat put it (on Christmas Eve no less), "Under the current circumstances, it is exceedingly difficult to acquire the absolutely necessary items, let alone relinquish them, regardless of whether the person in question is in possession of vouchers."[183] Even Dörhöfer was forced to admit that "The war has rendered the provision of new furniture impossible for the most part."[184] The same frugality can be detected among German farmers, who had gained little from the economic resurgence of the 1930s and even less from the outbreak of hostilities.[185] With respect to housing, Karl Patry's warnings to Hofmann in the summer of 1940 turned out to be quite prescient. We also cannot ignore the resentment many state and Party functionaries harbored toward the heavy-handed meddling of the SS within their domains, or discount the sheer administrative challenges inherent to regulating a nationwide resettlement program through a convoluted network of bureaucratic oversight. These same interrelated factors – the functional pragmatism of cost-saving efforts, the logistical complications of a wartime economy, and the polycratic political structure of the Third Reich – typified the deployment of re-Germanizable Poles in the labor force as well.

If material culture constituted one key plank of the assimilation process, work was equally important. Here too the Nazis inherited broader societal attitudes and class-based renderings of ethnic identity alongside bourgeois notions of "schooling" the working class in the virtues of punctuality, thrift, and industriousness. To reconcile the tensions between capitalistic competition and economic collectivism, the Nazi regime also coopted the liberal concept of *Leistung* ("performance" or "achievement"), inflecting it with racial overtones to further what one economic theorist described as the "communal sense that classes and professions are with and for each other."[186] These images of "proper" conduct linked up quite neatly with contemporary eugenic and racial-anthropological discourses. In addition to *Lebensbewährung*, or "social worth," *Lebenstüchtigkeit*, or "life management skills," was another catch-phrase tossed around in political, medical, and commercial circles.[187] According to racial theorists like Hans F.K. Günther, the behavioral style of the Nordic man was that of the *Leistungstypus*, a "performer who always attempted to transform his environment creatively" and "represented the norms and attitudes of the bourgeoisie" yet was also not class-specific; all members of the race shared these qualities regardless of their socio-economic standing.[188] For the Nazi Party itself, promoting and developing them meant replacing the old "liberal-individualistic ethos" with a militarized "readiness for

[183] HStD G 15, Nr. 5279: Landrat Lauterbach to Arbeitsamt Giessen, December 24, 1942.
[184] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 73: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 11, 1941.
[185] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 61-62.
[186] S. Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28-29.
[187] Robert Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 77.
[188] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 163.

sacrifice."[189] On a far more sinister level, this model of "improvement" through labor mirrored the infamous yet not altogether cynical choice of words that adorned the entrances to concentration camps from Dachau to Auschwitz: *Arbeit macht frei* – "work makes (you) free."

The historian Wolfgang Kaschuba has come up with the useful concept of "identity via work" to encapsulate how Germans adopted Nazified modes of social behavior in their everyday working lives.[190] This is a highly useful tool for illustrating the "personal reformation" WED candidates were expected to undergo. The race examiners told them before their departure from the Aussenstelle that "they would find work in the Old Reich and be treated according to their individual job performance."[191] In the words of another RuSHA operative, they had to "prove themselves worthy" of German citizenship by toiling on behalf of *Volk* and state. [192] Schultz elaborated this theme by further cementing the association between race and productivity: "In pursuit of a healthy racial policy, the question of lifestyle and performance will be accorded the greatest decisiveness… persons who are obvious failures in professional fields reveal so many defects… that a corresponding devaluation will already have taken place anyway."[193] The pamphlet of guidelines disseminated to the Betriebsführer contained a highly similar iteration of this policy line by emphasizing the importance of a "normal work output," though they also allowed that these people would "first have to get used to the German working speed and method."[194] Condescension aside, all of these prescriptions hewed closely to the ideological model for economic equality Himmler referred to as "socialism of good blood."[195] Erhard Wetzel and Gerhard Hecht had fleshed out what he meant by this in the fall of 1939, when they foresaw the "racially Nordic and ancestrally German segments" of the Polish population "work[ing] their way up through their own achievement," with a final Germanization "contingent on social mobility and promotion in the Old Reich."[196]

Judging from their letters, many WED candidates participated enthusiastically in the practice of "identity via work." Henryk Sliwinski and his family, for instance, were excited "to work as much as we can for the flowering of the *Volk* in the countryside." Writing from the village of Beberbeck outside Kassel, Nikolai Fornalczyk proclaimed, "If I was designated as a member of the German race, then I want

[189] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 68.

[190] Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Popular Culture and Workers' Culture as Symbolic Orders: Comments on the Debate about the History of Culture and Everyday Life," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 178-185.

[191] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/61-62: Schwalm to Greifelt, September 12, 1941.

[192] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.

[193] BA NS 2/161/29-34: Schultz, "Rassische Auslese und Volkstumspolitik," undated.

[194] LOC/NMT, 813-815, Hofmann Defense Doc. 87: "Memorandum for Plant Leaders on the Utilization of Persons Suitable for Re-Germanization" (English transcript), unsigned, September, 1941.

[195] Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 246.

[196] BA R 186/35: Wetzel and Hecht, "Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebiete nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte," November 25, 1939.

to be a loyal worker for the Reich… I know that work furthers the honor of the Reich."[197] Aleksander Miklaszewski similarly declared, "I truly want to endeavor to deserve naturalization. I want to work for my new homeland and I can assure you that my labor will bear fruit."[198] Yet for most initiates, the life of a farmhand brought intense strain and unhappiness, in large part because many had never even worked on a farm. Zdzislaw Pijanowski thought the regimen at his assigned estate in Kötschachtal far too strenuous; "I know nothing about farm work," he admitted. Lucja Marchlewska also inquired about the possibility of a transfer to another job, "one for which I am better suited" because "the work here is difficult, especially since I have not labored in this occupation before." Anton Kwiatkowski likewise lobbied for a position as an accountant: "This field and its terminology are familiar to me, unlike farm work."[199]

Beyond simple inexperience, the letters reveal a palpable class bias toward farming, a professional sphere many deemed beneath their dignity if they came from urban areas, a middle-class upbringing, or a highly educated background. Adam Galonskiewicz, employed by Wilhelm Hörr in rural Hesse, leveled the following complaint to Schwalm in July 1941: "I am not pleased with my job. Instead of becoming a tractor driver or a truck driver in the city, I must milk the cows in a shed and clean up the dung." The fact that the Betriebsführer often made re-Germanizables perform menial chores like feeding, cleaning, or otherwise tending to the animals only intensified their umbrage. In this regard, the case of Loszek Turek is particularly indicative. Loszek's father was a former civil servant and he himself had graduated second in his class at the business Gymnasium in Łódź. "From this," he wrote to Dongus in December 1941, "you can perhaps deduce how difficult it is for me to be a milker's apprentice… a hard occupation in which there is no future for me." In Gelsenkirchen outside Dortmund, Alfons Krolikowski was downright incensed that the local labor office registered his family as agricultural laborers: "This deployment should be out of the question; we were promised that my father would be hired as an administrator and I as an office clerk."[200]

It seems that some of the more learned individuals came to the Reich with preconceived expectations about the modern efficiency and technological sophistication of German farms, only to be disappointed by the reality that many had no machinery or motorized vehicles and instead relied on labor-intensive work carried out with archaic implements, draught animals, or human hands. Kazimierz Bryl and Stanislaw Szymczak reacted with dismay when they realized they would not plow the fields with tractors and coveted a workplace that had them: "We already had a great love for machines in Poland, but there were few of them there, so we would like to learn here in Germany." Pluskota, who had spent three years in America as an engineer and machinist, was also shocked to discover that his employer did not

[197] 5/32/1-2: Sliwinski, 1.1.41; 5/35/51: Fornalczyk, 6.28.42.
[198] 5/32/92: Miklaszewski, 6.8.41.
[199] 3/20a/103: Pijanowski, 6.26.41; 5/32/80: Marchlewska, 5.5.41; 5/32/87: Kwiatkowski, 6.2.41.
[200] 5/32/134: Galonskiewicz, 7.27.41; 3/20a/300: Turek, 12.10.41; 3/20a/28: Krolikowski, 2.1.41.

own a tractor for him to operate. Tadeusz Ladzinski, a former agronomy student, blatantly derided the farm of his overseer. "[T]he farm is small and I'm learning nothing," he rued, "The work is less interesting from day to day and my eagerness to work makes me stand out…I just want a job that requires responsibility and is not as idiotic as the work one does here."[201] Even those who were farmers by trade voiced discontent with what they interpreted as a drastic demotion in prestige. Hofmann conceded in June 1940 that many candidates were "still in a depressed mood, which is understandable when one considers that they previously worked as free farmers and now must work as agricultural laborers."[202] An SD officer in Stuttgart came to the same conclusion in September 1941: "It must be quite difficult for Germanizables who once lived on their own soil as prosperous farmers to be dependent now as servants and maids."[203] Helena Szalwinska captured this sense of social resentment perfectly: "The seasonal workers who had nothing have it good, but for those of us who had a farm in Poland, things are awful."[204]

When he created the WED in May 1940, Himmler ordered the RuSHA to select farmers exclusively for work in agriculture. For him, as for many other Nazis, "peasant virtue was indissolubly linked to the concept of 'racial renewal'… the village, with its special social framework, was supposed to embody a sort of microcosmic model of the Nazi 'people's community,' which was in turn supposed to replicate on a larger scale the idea of the village society as a system of economic, social, and cultural integration."[205] Already in the summer of 1940, however, the circumstances of mass resettlement prompted a reorientation of policy. To colonize ethnic German resettlers in the annexed territories of Poland, the SS could not just evict farmers; they had to free up jobs for people from a variety of professional backgrounds. Sometime in July, therefore, Himmler sanctioned the employment of WED candidates in commercial and industrial concerns, and at the end of that month Greifelt confirmed that "families not employed in agriculture… will also be subject to racial screening and resettled in Germany proper if found suitable for re-Germanization." Though the technical details had yet to be worked out, he enjoined the HSSPFs to begin making necessary preparations. He also mentioned that, as far as agricultural laborers were concerned, the RuSHA would try to include "only independent farmers who until now owned their own well-managed farms in the Warthegau and are versed in all agricultural trades."[206] This extension to non-agricultural vocations proceeded slowly at first due to the shortage of urban housing and the difficulty of vetting such a broad array of workplaces – each of which necessitated

[201] 5/32/45: Bryl and Szymczak, 3.27.41; 2/20/94: Pluskota, 12.8.40; 5/31/81-82: Ladzinski, 12.6.40.
[202] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.
[203] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[204] 5/31/17: Szalwinska, 8.1.40.
[205] Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Peasants and Others: The Historical Contours of Village Class Society," in *The German Peasantry: Conflict and Community in Rural Society from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, eds. Richard J. Evans and W.R. Lee (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 236.
[206] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/3-4: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 31, 1940.

a restructuring of the WED apparatus.[207] The Labor Ministry alerted its branches to the change in December and the following month the RKF founded a special "Labor Allocation Section."[208] By February 1941, Schwalm and his staff were busy organizing the delivery of skilled workers to businesses across the Reich.[209] By April, Fähndrich had finalized arrangements to "place the deployment of re-Germanizable persons in commercial and industrial occupations on a widespread footing."[210]

What caused this change in direction? Logistical problems and economic demands were clearly salient factors. The lack of space on many farms and the "shortage of labor forces of all kinds" persuaded Bethge that "Accommodation difficulties should not remove another kind of labor deployment from consideration." Even though the housing situation was increasingly dire in most towns and cities as well – the result of Allied bombing and the influx of foreign workers – in his view the best way to avoid the emergence of additional costs was "to ensure that the procurement of industrial and commercial jobs moves forward."[211] In October 1940, he even broached the question of "whether the selection procedure could be relaxed somewhat" in order to boost enrollment and place individual laborers in workplaces that were incapable quartering whole families. But increasing economic production was hardly the overriding motive. Bethge based his recommendations on the as yet small number of inductees and the absence of "previous objections to large-scale selection," as well as his personal impression of "how very excellent the Germanizables look."[212] He wanted to enlarge the "hunt for good blood," not acquire manpower by any means. In fact, Himmler had always envisaged the WED as a diverse platform of social integration that would bring subjects "into all sectors, as officials, employees, industrial workers, businessmen, tradesmen, and, last but not least, into the rural population."[213] Although skilled workers usually could not live with their employers, as before, the decision over who could hire or shelter re-Germanizables belonged to the HSSPFs. Political reliability and the availability of sufficient lodgings remained paramount. "The main weight," Fähndrich stressed, "lies on the readiness of domiciles and not on special wishes or requirements for laborers in specific occupations."[214] The race and resettlement experts never downgraded the priority to situate re-Germanizables in a pastoral setting; Schwalm for one attached "great importance to settling craftsmen according to their trade *in the countryside or in small towns*."[215] Nor did they forsake their penchant for recruiting farmers or their faith in the restorative power of life in the countryside. At the start of 1943, the overwhelming majority of WED candidates were still employed

[207] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/11-12: Greifelt to Seldte, September 24, 1940.
[208] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/10: Timm to Landesarbeitsämter, December 16, 1940. Also see Koehl, *RKFDV*, 80, 83.
[209] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/24: Schwalm to Greifelt, February 11, 1941.
[210] BA R 49/73/28-29: Fähndrich to Seldte and HSSPFs, April 15, 1941.
[211] BA R 49/73/48-49: Bethge to HSSPFs, July 7, 1941.
[212] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940.
[213] BA NS 2/61/30-31: Himmler to Bormann, May 20, 1940.
[214] BA R 49/73/28-29: Fähndrich to Seldte and HSSPFs, April 15, 1941.
[215] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/24: Schwalm to Greifelt, February 11, 1941 [emphasis in original].

in the agrarian sector; in nearly every SS district, there were more than twice as many engaged in farming than in other pursuits, and in some areas the former dwarfed the latter.[216] As of August 1942, the SS had admitted 13, 137 Polish civilians into the Re-Germanization Procedure.[217] By comparison, there were well over a million Polish laborers working in the Reich at this time.[218] WED candidates amounted to a mere drop in the proverbial bucket, making up less than 1 percent of this overall total.

The dominant motivating factor behind the extension of the program to non-agricultural enterprises was the fact that many people whom the RuSHA classified as "racially valuable" were not peasants, and by the fall of 1940 they had started to pile up at the Aussenstelle for want of housing and appropriate positions. The true impetus, however, did not originate with the SS or any other government body; it came from below. In modifying the conventions of the WED, officials at the RuSHA and the RKF responded to the urgent appeals of subjects who were already in country – specifically those who had no farming experience – just as they intervened to help them when other offices declined to heed their injunctions. They tried to accommodate the professional faculties of re-Germanizable Poles by widening the scope of economic deployment, but this concession added the extra task of matching them to jobs in their former occupations and, in effect, "marketing" them as worthwhile hires. In February and March of 1941, the Aussenstelle sent out long inventories detailing the kinds of professions represented among camp inmates – from butchers, blacksmiths, and railway engineers to tailors and shoemakers to businessmen and legal assistants to glassblowers and fountain manufacturers.[219] In July, Schwalm also wired three "special operational lists" to Fähndrich and the HSSPFs, which named several dozen German-speaking clerical workers who had been in the camps for months and whose acquisition would "surely be enabled by the severe shortage of labor forces in the Reich."[220] The following month, he sent out a fourth list that included a secretary, Janina Surmacewicz, who "writes and speaks German almost perfectly" and was "employed for a year as a typist in the camps of the UWZ," as well as two barkeepers: "Kazimierz Karlik and wife: Both speak fluent German. Employment as warehouse clerks or something similar, preferably in the spirits industry or in a wine store."[221] Schwalm and his colleagues even sought to enhance the economic utility of the program by permitting WED candidates to enroll in agricultural trade schools and setting up three-month vocational courses in Berlin and Vienna to train them as

[216] BA NS 19/1780/29: Map – "Anzahl der wiedereindeutschungsfähigen Polen und Slowenen getrennt nach SS-Oberabschnitten," January 31, 1943.

[217] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[218] This figure comes from Richard C. Lukas and Norman Davies, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation, 1939-1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), 32-33.

[219] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/86: Dongus to Hofmann and Greifelt, February 14, 1941; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/118-119: Dongus to Fähndrich, March 10, 1941.

[220] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/39: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, August 1, 1941.

[221] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/49-51: Schwalm to Greifelt, Hofmann, and HSSPFs, August 25, 1941.

metalworkers, welders, machinists, and electricians. Interested parties needed only apply through their respective HSSPF.[222]

Of course, it was not always possible to cater to the qualifications of deportees. The SS still forced inductees to take up trades in which they had no training, and relegation to the fields always remained the default option. Yet by employing them in occupations with which they were familiar, or in middle-class occupations that were less physically strenuous than farming (clerical work, for instance), this new methodology definitely made life much easier for a number of people. Whereas Sloderbach "found a job in my profession as a seamstress," Zielinski was "pleased with the job" because "I am employed in my profession as a ceramic worker and receive the wages of a skilled laborer." Local notables in Meiningen in southern Thuringia even invited Leon Buchholz to join the municipal orchestra as a staff musician.[223] As the SD in Stuttgart discerned, candidates usually displayed a positive attitude toward their German neighbors if they held positions that entailed a level of responsibility and independence.[224] Roman Sobkowiak was able to form lasting friendships with a number of citizens in Ulm because his post as a technician for one of the city's radio stations often took him to residential homes on service calls.[225] Maria Kondek worked as a teller at the Württemberg Savings Bank in Stuttgart, a role befitting her self-image as a "maiden from a good family." Irena Stachurska spent her days as a clerk at the Economic Office in Schwenningen am Neckar, while Alexandra Dabrowska took pleasure in her "very good comrades" at the rifle factory in Oberndorf where she served as stenographer and secretary. A not insignificant number of WED candidates also articulated a desire to harness their strength to the German war machine, and some even thanked the SS for giving them a chance to do so. Pudelska's son Jurek said he was eminently satisfied with his job at the Bavarian Motorworks factory in Donnerstadt, whereas Stachurska and her brother were "very grateful to Obersturmführer Grotz" for the positions he arranged for them in an armaments plant. Dabrowska praised Grotz and the Nazi regime more generally: "We like it here in Württemberg very much… I am very thankful for everything that has been done for us."[226] These people construed employment in a respectable, well-paying job as evidence that the race examiners had fulfilled their promises of a better life, which made them far more likely to identify as Germans. Stefan Milczarek, a carpenter living in Arolson, first expressed satisfaction with his work-life (though not his employer) and then pledged unwavering loyalty to the German nation: "My boss is indifferent to everything, but I still want to live and continue to work for my fatherland."[227]

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[222] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/32: Künzel to Lorenz, October 12, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/58-59: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, September 8, 1941.

[223] 2/20/218: Srednicki, 12.8.40; 3/20a/95: Sloderbach, 6.7.41; 5/32/90: Zielinski, 6.7.41; 5/35/47: Buchholz, 7.26.42.

[224] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.

[225] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 9.

[226] 5/34/106: Kondek, 4.25.42; 5/35/92: Stachurska, 10.14.42; 5/35/78: Dabrowska, 9.11.42; 5/36/41: Pudelska, 5.27.41.

[227] 5/34/90: Milczarek, 4.10.42.

By the same token, however, an assignment one reckoned demeaning or distasteful could have the opposite effect. We have already witnessed instances of this reaction with untrained farmhands, though disillusionment with the work environment stemmed from the nature of the profession as well as relations with German proprietors and co-workers, just as it did for those who enjoyed their work. Take the case of Jan Masurek, the chimney-sweep in Esslingen whom we encountered at the outset of this study. Jan confessed in one letter that he wailed incessantly and teetered on the edge of sanity, not only because he saw his job as something shameful and unbecoming of a "well-educated German," but because his boss reigned over him like a tyrant. Or consider the travails of Zygmunt Seweryn, who worked at an iron foundry in Ötisheim where he was "always given the worst tasks," such as unloading stone-carts alongside French prisoners of war, and had to put up with constant harassment from his colleagues too. Like "racially alien" forced laborers from Eastern Europe, re-Germanizable Poles were often given assignments regarded as dirty or scatological.[228] Wladislawa Palczewska performed the unenviable duties of a sanitation worker in the small Swabian town of Lützenhardt. "What a misfortune it is," she wrote to Schwalm, "that you have sent me to do punitive labor. Such treatment of human beings I have neither seen nor heard of." Wladislawa and her fourteen year-old son slogged daily through the sewers "amid the water, mud, feces, and refuse," clad only "in torn-up shirts and boots." When she protested these conditions on one occasion, her boss replied, "'If I can stand it, then you can.'"[229]

In theory, the aim of a quick re-Germanization took precedence over economic or financial concerns. In practice, local Germans often disregarded this proviso, especially when it came to payment for services rendered. WED candidates worked under the terms of yearly contracts that entitled them to the same remuneration as their German counterparts.[230] Although some did net wages proportionate to their station and working hours, many Betriebsführer concocted all sorts of creative ways to chisel and fleece them. In the countryside, re-Germanizables were supposed to get free food, rent, and utilities as payment in kind, but their landlords often charged them for these conveniences anyway or withheld them altogether.[231] In urban areas, commercial and industrial firms subtracted exorbitant fees from their paychecks; the Zielinskis, for example, paid half of their sum to the business that employed them.[232] Sometimes German managers justified low wages or denial of payment by pleading ignorance. "We have already worked since July 22," Stanislaw Stanczak stated on November 10, 1940, "but we know nothing of wages. When we ask the Herr about payment, he says he doesn't know how much he is supposed to

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[228] Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 219.

[229] 5/35/70-71: Masurek, 8.25.42; 5/35/116: Seweryn, 11.4.42; 5/32/37: Palczewska, 3.6.41.

[230] StS Wü 168 T2, Nr. 207: Kaul, "Betriebsführer-Merkblatt für den Einsatz wiedereindeutschungsfähiger Personen," undated.

[231] 5/31/89: Stankiewicz, 12.29.40; 5/32/82: Maternowski, 5.26.41; 3/20a/5: Stasiak, 1.3.41.

[232] 5/32/90: Zielinski, 6.7.41.

pay us because our papers have still not arrived from Łódź."[233] Others responded to the pleas of their workers with righteous indignation. In Bielefeld, Stefan Kulawczyk labored tirelessly for the pittance of fifty-five Pfennig per hour; when he went to the payment office to negotiate a higher wage "the foreman was offended."[234] If anything, most re-Germanizables earned the same lowly income as Polish Wanderarbeiter. Although Künzel promised Wladyslaw Skrzypeck a salary of twenty-five RM per hour, he actually took in that amount each month. Nikolaus Marszalek and his wife received only one RM per day, even though Grotz told him they would collect twenty RM at that rate. Such meager pay left candidates for re-Germanization totally unable to make ends meet, let alone aspire to a "German standard of living." "It is impossible for me to buy the essentials for my family," Wladyslaw Stasiak demurred, "on this income, I can hardly provide what is most necessary to live."[235]

Such anecdotes reflected a much larger dilemma: many Germans did not want to employ these people, in most cases because they coveted able-bodied laborers, not entire families with children and the elderly. Despite the dearth of manpower in the Reich, the SS could not find enough proprietors who were willing and able to take part in the WED. Hofmann had already learned in June 1940 that farmers in Bavaria had spurned the opportunity to hire re-Germanizables because they were already contented with their "pure" Polish migrant workers.[236] As Greifelt later explained, "From the purely economic point of view, the situation was such that German industries preferred foreign elements to our resettlers because they would have had to guarantee them accommodations and welfare that corresponded to the German standard of living. The more foreign laborers there were at their disposal, the less readiness there was on the part of an enterprise to accept workers from the ranks of our resettlers."[237] WED candidates noticed this sentiment as well. Bryl and Szymczak claimed their boss disliked them because "he thinks he has to pay us too much [six RM monthly!]." Aleksander Zimmer related a comparable incident: "On June 3, 1941, an official from the labor office in Kusel visited us and told the farmer how much he should pay us. This is too costly for the farmer and he doesn't agree with the payment amount."[238]

To make matters worse, revenue officials frequently compelled WED candidates to forfeit the so-called social compensation tax (*Sozialausgleichsabgabe*), a 15 percent tariff levied on the income of all Polish and Jewish laborers. Upon hearing of this in November 1940, Greifelt demanded that they "forego assessing the fees for the deployment of foreigners." "The basis of all these measures," he reiterated, "is the idea that these 'Poles' must not be treated as Poles, but rather as essentially German people, all the

[233] 5/35/2: Grzbarczyk, 5.3.42; 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40.
[234] 2/20.193: Kulawczyk, 10.26.40.
[235] 2/20/156: Skrzypeck, 9.2.40; 5/34/16: Marszalek, 1.15.42; 3/20a/5: Stasiak, 1.3.41.
[236] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.
[237] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 791.
[238] 5/32/45: Bryl and Szymczak, 3.27.41; 3/20a/91: Zimmer, 6.30.41.

more so because we want to acknowledge German blood in every respect and stand by it."[239] His words did little to curb these deductions. A year later, in the autumn of 1941, HSSPF Gutenberger fired off an angry missive to the municipal finance offices in his district: "The SS officers delegated with the supervision of this group have repeatedly informed me that re-Germanizable persons are being equated with Poles and other foreign laborers and, among other things, assessed the social compensation tax." He reminded them that the RuSHA had selected these individuals according to racial criteria: "Hence, they are of German descent and *must be treated as Reich Germans*, regardless of their still incomplete naturalization."[240] The following month, HSSPF Kaul sent a directive to this effect to all participating workplaces in Württemberg.[241] Candidates themselves were well aware that discriminatory taxation decreased the likelihood of Germans accepting them as equals, as Stefan Weimann pointed out:

> We were given assurances at the camp in Łódź that we would be treated the same as German ethnic comrades… However, we too have to pay taxes in accordance with the law regarding Poles. We already raised this issue with SS officers during their visit from Detmold and they promised us tax equity, yet we are still taxed at the higher rate… We work in a factory toward the same end goal as everyone else, yet our deduction is much higher, and we fear our colleagues' attitude toward us will change because we are taxed like Poles in spite of everything.[242]

Far more disconcerting to the SS than the interference and negligence of provincial administrators, however, was the ruthless conduct of Germans who did hire WED candidates. The Nazis' prescribed norms of disciplined social behavior on the job differed markedly from the moral economy that emerged out of the work experience itself. For a great number of subjects, re-Germanization amounted to little more than hard labor; the letters are filled with tales of merciless exploitation that took place at establishments across Germany and Austria, where employers drove them to work from dawn until late into the night, regardless of the weather. Even in the middle of the winter, when snowstorms and freezing rain became a daily occurrence, Ludwig Bryczak had to work "thirteen hours a day just for a piece of bread!" "As a fifty year-old man I am not as spry as the young people," Zygmunt Poprawa objected to the "lightning-quick work" his employer exacted: "Here one must be energetic like a squirrel… I will surely perish once the harvest time comes."[243]

The central irony here is that German hosts who treated WED candidates with kindness ended up advancing the mission of racial consolidation, while the more malevolent ones actually undermined this venture. But there was a further wrinkle: for some subjects, exploitation actually bolstered feelings of affinity with the German people – or at least it must have appeared that way to the purveyors of Nazi

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[239] Der *Menscheneinsatz*, 57-59.

[240] LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 147, Bd. 44: Gutenberger to Finanzämter Düsseldorf, Köln, Hannover, and Münster, October 10, 1941 [emphasis in original].

[241] StS Wü 168 T2, Nr. 207: Kaul, "8. Anweisung für Einsatzstellen eindeutschungsfähiger Polen," November 15, 1941.

[242] 3/20a/47: Weimann, 3.23.41.

[243] 3/20a/1: Kosmider, 1.1.41; 3/20a/8: Bryczak, 1.12.41; 5/32/76b: Poprawa, 5.18.41.

Volkstumspolitik. Infuriated by the higher wages and easier routine of German farmhands, Kulawczyk insisted, "We belong to the German people just as much as those who live here. Why should they earn more and work less than me?" Some candidates alleged that they stood a rung beneath Polish migrant workers and other non-Germans in the social hierarchy of foreign laborers. "We were told that we would be treated like every Reich German," wrote Spychalski, "but instead we are treated even worse than the Poles." Jan Bieganski similarly told a story of how his boss, Willi Klein, purchased a new work suit for a sixteen year old Polish boy; when Jan begged leave to re-sole his shoes, however, Klein slapped him. "The Poles who work here receive a higher wage and are not beaten," he inveighed, "The Poles are treated better than me!" Seweryn was equally perplexed by this apparent contradiction: "Many French prisoners and Ukrainians are better off than me. I don't know why this is. At the agency [in Łódź], I was told that I have the same rights that Germans have. But lately I've been treated worse than the Poles who wear the 'P' patch."[244] Some individuals took this rhetorical approach even further. Zygmunt Malkowski and Mieczyslaw Janiak claimed, "We are treated almost like slaves and not as Germans, as we should be treated." Pawlak hit on a similar phrase in one of his letters to Schwalm: "We are a German family, yet we are treated worse than serfs."[245] In such circumstances, it is little wonder that WED candidates appropriated Nazi ideology for their own ends. Even if they only mimicked the virulent racism of SS officers, by drawing attention to their own misery in relation to that of groups typically maligned as outsiders they validated policies of racial subjugation and reified the principles of the National Socialist worldview. Suffering did not automatically instill these people with empathy; instead, it often convinced them to try to elevate themselves by disdaining those who experienced the same thing. In seeking to avoid oppression, they legitimized the oppression of others.

The race and resettlement experts of the SS were definitely cognizant of the dysfunction creeping over the Re-Germanization Procedure. In reference to a group of farmers in Brandenburg, Hofmann acknowledged the following in a letter to Greifelt in late August 1940: "It is evident from the available reports and the incoming letters of these Polish families that no attempt is being made to bring them closer to Germandom, neither with respect to accommodations nor with respect to treatment in general. The farmers and landowners are obviously not aware of their obligations."[246] On November 15, 1940, Friedrich Jeckeln, at that time the HSSPF in Westphalia, openly blamed these "problems and cases of doubt" on the carelessness of administrative and Party officials. He felt duty-bound to recapitulate the purpose of the program by going over relevant decrees and exhort them to "do everything we can to recover these racially valuable people for Germandom and abstain from anything that hinders this

[244] 5/35/84: Spychalski, undated; 5/32/135: Bieganski, 7.27.41; 5/35/116: Seweryn, 11.4.42.
[245] 3/20a/202: Malkowski and Janiak, 8.31.41; 5/32/30: Pawlak, 2.16.41.
[246] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/8-9: Hofmann to Greifelt, August 28, 1940.

goal."[247] Although by then the RKF Staff Main Office knew of similar episodes, Greifelt did not think it necessary in the fall of 1940 to pressure central Party agencies to bring their subordinates to heel. With only 750 candidates settled in the Reich as of October 9, he worried that such "educational measures" might undercut the regulations for Polish Wanderarbeiter. The authority of the HSSPFs would suffice to straighten out any snags with organs of the NSDAP – or so he thought.[248] Jeckeln complained again in July 1941 that local authorities had continued to throw up all kinds of obstacles.[249] The month before, in the same letter in which he bragged about the program's success, Hofmann concluded that "nearly all government offices handle the Germanization problem with very little tact."[250] Karl Gutenberger, who took over as HSSPF in Westphalia in the spring of 1941, tried to mask the scope of these problems and pass them off as the consequence of misunderstandings: "As before, the implementation of tasks for the strengthening of German ethnicity incurs difficulties of various kinds because local public authorities are not sufficiently conversant with the ordinances for the treatment of re-Germanizable persons."[251] Yet despite everything the SS had done to authenticate the special standing of these people, there were clear indications that the integrity of re-Germanization *was* being questioned.

In the course of this chapter, we have come across Germans who underwrote or reinforced state-sponsored understandings of race, those who undermined or challenged them, as well as those who exploited them to advance their own agenda. Some did all of these things at the same time. The attitudes of WED candidates themselves were largely predicated on material factors, on the extent to which supervisors provided them with a decent socio-economic standing or at least the basic necessities of everyday life. Grotz recalled that at first initiates "were quite reticent and shy, but when they saw afterwards that they had good accommodations and jobs and realized that they were being taken care of, then, of course, they started being a bit more open."[252] It is tempting to argue that these people merely feigned their affirmations of Germanness, and even a cursory foray into the growing scholarship on national indifference in East-Central Europe would suggest that such nominal identifications amounted to just another example of side-switching. This was no doubt true in many cases. A number of Roman Sobkowiak's comrades, as he put it, "revealed a willingness to cater to the SS in order to obtain a better life with the advantages of a 'full German citizen.'"[253] Given their intimate familiarity with the deplorable privations endured by most foreign laborers, it would have been extremely difficult for WED candidates to do otherwise. When they felt that their living conditions had become untenable, on the other hand, they

[247] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19997: Jeckeln to Regierungspräsident Aachen, November 15, 1940.
[248] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/15-17: Greifelt to Hofmann, October 9, 1940.
[249] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19997: Jeckeln to Regierungspräsident Aachen, July 15, 1941.
[250] BA NS 2/45/160-161: Hofmann to Körbel, June 9, 1941.
[251] LNWD BR 1312, Br. 147, Bd. 44: Gutenberger to Finanzämter Düsseldorf, Köln, Hannover, and Münster, October 10, 1941.
[252] See the testimony of Hermann Grotz in LOC/NMT, 802-803.
[253] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 52.

were more than capable of manipulating the xenophobic discourses of National Socialism by appealing to notions of racial solidarity as a means of attaining a "German standard of living."

Be that as it may, the patterns on display in the letters and the reports of state functionaries are far too numerous and consistent to conclude that every re-Germanizable was simply faking it or going through the motions. Neither they nor their German hosts invariably acted in accordance with a strategically-oriented or incentive-based calculus of rational self-interest, even if state and Party officials in the provinces often did. They constructed their sense of belonging to a larger collectivity with reference to shared emotions and values, shaping their social space by forging or withholding bonds of fellowship in ways that often had little to do with narrow egotism or instrumental rationality. While most almost certainly entered into the WED in expectation of personal benefit – the prospect of a better life for re-Germanizables, the enticement of fresh workers for their hosts – some also bought into ideas behind the "hunt for good blood," or at least appeared to. It is difficult to say whether their motivation derived more from straightforward conviviality, hard-headed opportunism, or doctrinaire conviction, though these were not mutually exclusive mindsets and the truth in most cases probably combined aspects of each. Whatever the case may have been, it is clear that while all those involved ultimately lived at the mercy of a dictatorial police state, they were far from passive objects or helpless pawns. The Re-Germanization Procedure could not function without civilian participants who tacitly and often openly supported the Nazi mandate to unite all "persons of German blood" into a single territorial empire. Racial classification was a social process, and despite all the problems that cropped up in the Reich, the architects of Nazi Germanization policy could still feel confident that the program was on the right track. In a manner that alternately endorsed and disavowed the legitimacy of the WED, the social, material, and cultural factors animating re-Germanization as a local practice of community-building began to calibrate the broader norms and boundaries of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by way of the peculiar dialogue the initiative elicited between state and non-state actors. We shall see this dialogue again in the next chapter, as we explore the gendered dimensions of the Re-Germanization Procedure and the distinctive experiences of female inductees.

Chapter Four: Valuable Future Mothers

"I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race…

Could I wed a savage woman, steept perhaps in monstrous crime?"

–Alfred Lord Tennyson

"She has completely the exterior of a German-Pole, fine skin and color, but fleshy… so slovenly, like all Polish women, so shaped, so inviting, and so dirty."

–Johann Gottlieb Fichte

In the summer of 1941, far away from her home in western Poland, young Ksawera Zoltobrocka was living a charmed life in the northern German province of Holstein. The SS had enrolled Ksawera in the Re-Germanization Procedure as a domestic servant (*Hausgehilfin*) that May, though her daily routine at the villa of the Georg family was hardly as demanding as one might expect. She arose from bed late in the morning. After a few hours of chores and a quick lunch, she whiled away the hours sunbathing and swimming in a nearby lake, and after dinner she visited the port city of Kiel for evening diversions. Frau Georg even took Ksawera along on a vacation to Berlin, where the bright lights of the "flashy city" made a captivating impression. Things had not always been so pleasant, however. The employer to whom the RKF had originally entrusted her, a certain Frau von Conradi, forced Ksawera to work day and night at a furious pace and forbade her from associating with German boys. One day, fed up with the girl's constant weeping and apparently lackluster performance, Frau von Conradi packed her belongings and handed her over to the custody of a local SS outpost. The officers there took pity on Ksawera; they transferred her to the Georgs, under whose benevolent supervision she quickly regained her liveliness. In a letter to Fritz Schwalm at the RuSHA Aussenstelle dated July 14, 1941, she thanked God for the chance to become a German and announced with great pride that she was already well on her way to doing so.[1]

One time-honored approach to understanding this series of events might tell us that Ksawera was not only a beneficiary of National Socialism, but an open collaborator, a woman who betrayed her nation and enabled state terror and genocidal warfare by performing traditional women's roles. Another prevailing interpretation would have us believe, by way of contrast, that she was first and foremost a victim of the Nazis' racialized patriarchy, not only because of her plebeian status as a foreign laborer, but by virtue of simply being a woman.[2] Although neither conclusion is entirely incorrect, the ambiguity of

[1] USHMMA 15.021M/5/32/127: Zoltobrocka to Schwalm, July 14, 1941. Citations of the letters will henceforth appear in the same format as in the previous chapter.

[2] This debate, sometimes referred to as the *Historikerinnenstreit*, primarily revolves around the conflicting positions of Gisela Bock, who claimed that German women were uniformly victims of "sexist racism," and Claudia Koonz, who argued that they legitimized the policies of the Nazi regime by performing traditional women's roles; see Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation*

the story belies the all-too-neat boundaries of these established paradigms. Ksawera was not a clear-cut victim; she was incorporated into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, not excluded from it. Her experiences, like those of other foreign women the Nazis defined as "persons capable of re-Germanization" make it necessary to follow the lead of scholars who have recently begun to move beyond the generalized dichotomies of older feminist scholarship, to eschew simplistic equations of male/female with perpetrator/victim, to grasp the multiplicity of dispositions that ordinary people could inhabit, to discern their capacity to influence Nazi empire-building, and to explore the cultural attitudes that informed their choices.[3] With these considerations in mind, the present chapter focuses on a special feature of the WED – the recruitment of "racially valuable" Polish girls to work as domestic servants in the Reich. Taking this peculiar initiative as a case study, we will probe the triangulated discourses of race, class, and gender that both repressed and empowered female re-Germanizables in order to illuminate the various meanings imparted to sexuality, domesticity, and reproduction for women caught up in the "hunt for good blood."[4]

If the WED embodied the Nazis' characteristic obsessions with racial degeneration and demographic renewal, these obsessions were even more pronounced when it came to young women. Yet in creating a specific program for "racially valuable" housemaids, Himmler and his underlings were in fact confronting a much older complex of social, cultural, and economic issues. The number of domestic servants in Germany had declined steadily since the turn of the century, as women increasingly turned to less onerous jobs with better wages, living conditions, employee benefits, and prospects for advancement. In 1925, only 11.4 percent of all professionally active women worked in the household; by 1933, that number had sunk to 10.5 percent.[5] Fearing this trend would leave German wives overburdened and unable to perform the "maternal duties" of bearing and rearing children, the Nazis launched a series of initiatives

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im Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1986); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988). Both of these positions are elaborated and debated further in the classic edited volume by Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review, 1984). For a further sampling of the vast literature on this topic, see Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: Longman, 2001); Atina Grossmann, "Feminist Debates about Women and National Socialism," *Gender & History* 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1991): 350-358; Adelheid von Saldern, "Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945*, ed. David F. Crew (New York: Routledge, 1994), 141-165.

[3] See e.g. Elizabeth G. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Vandana Joshi, *Gender and Power in the Third Reich: Female Denouncers and the Gestapo, 1933-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Regina Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen. Sexuelle Gewalttaten und intime Beziehungen deutscher Soldaten in der Sowjetunion 1941-1945* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2010); Annette F. Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin-Harcourt, 2013). Also see the articles in Sybille Steinbacher, ed., *Volksgenossinen. Frauen in der NS-Volksgemeinschaft* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007).

[4] I have borrowed this approach in large part from Robert J.C. Young's fascinating essay "Sex and Inequality: The Cultural Construction of Race" in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[5] Mareike Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung. Hausgehilfinnen im Nationalsozialismus," in *Ungleichheiten im 'Dritten Reich'. Semantiken, Praktiken, Erfahrungen*, eds. Nicole Kramer and Armin Nolzen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 157.

to reverse it. They dispatched young women to help needy families in rural areas, provided trained aides to expectant mothers and those who had recently given birth, and disseminated a slew of propaganda intoning the ethnic-political significance of domestic work.[6] One periodical in 1937 extolled it as a pursuit "of the greatest importance for the *Volksgemeinschaft*. As assistants to the housewife, German domestic servants are jointly responsible for the fulfillment of those tasks for the rebuilding of our nation which fall to the German household and the German family."[7] Such high-flown rhetoric fell largely on deaf ears; all of the Nazis' various recruitment drives failed to meet demand due to a lack of volunteers. In the Westphalian county of Warendorf, for instance, 213 "suitable" households requested domestics in 1936, but only four girls signed up.[8] Even when the Nazis instituted a compulsory year of labor service for all German women under the age of twenty-five in 1938 (the so-called *Pflichtjahr*), people used a variety of tactics to avoid having their daughters posted in the countryside as housemaids.[9] For most young women, domestic service in general was an unappealing occupation that afforded little by way of prestige or material comfort. As one SD officer observed in April 1939, "The vast majority of young girls have absolutely no interest in working in domestic service, to say nothing of such work in child-rich families [*kinderreiche Familien*]."[10] The erosion of traditional class and gender boundaries that hastened this situation convinced the Nazis to look for a solution beyond the borders of the Reich. In 1937, the Interior Ministry had even discussed whether foreigners could be employed in Jewish households, so long as the former were not of "German or kindred blood." After the outbreak of the Second World War, many German administrators and soldiers took matters into their own hands and illegally brought back young girls from occupied Poland to work in their homes.[11]

Although the Second World War exacerbated manpower deficiencies in virtually every area of the German economy, the worsening scarcity of housemaids presented the Nazi regime with an especially vexing dilemma. Relying on Polish laborers to make up shortfalls in the agricultural sector was one thing; placing them within the intimate sphere of German households was something else entirely. At the Nazi Party Chancellery, Martin Bormann warned of the "very considerable danger of racially undesirable offspring resulting from the interactions of Polish laborers with German ethnic comrades," which was "especially great with female Polish laborers who are sent to positions where they work alone, for example, as domestic servants."[12] He and other Nazis invoked the discursive icon of the Slavic Flood as a metaphor for the influx of a racialized female Other and the threat of ethnic dissolution she posed,

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[6] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 185-186.
[7] Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung," 155.
[8] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 185.
[9] Jill Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front: Württemberg under the Nazis* (New York: Humbledon Continuum, 2006), 58.
[10] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 185.
[11] Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung," 161, 165.
[12] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/4: Bormann to Greiser, February 15, 1941.

channeling German anxieties about the sexuality of Polish women that went back to the days of the Enlightenment.[13]

Since the late nineteenth century at least, popular misgivings over the importation of Polish migrant workers had also centered on young women, housemaids and midwives above all, whose supposed debauchery and heightened national consciousness challenged the stability of patriarchal and ethnic hierarchies. Commentators from across the socio-political spectrum summoned the well-known trope of "Polish economy" (*polnische Wirtschaft*) – a synonym for chaos and unruliness – to condemn these women as wicked harlots and agents of the Catholic Church who sought to lure German men away from their normative domestic lifestyle and native cultural-religious upbringing.[14] This holistic concept of miscegenation applied to the realm of ethnonational politics in East-Central Europe a preexisting colonialist argument that blamed the susceptibility of European men to "going native" while abroad on the erotic appeal and heightened sex drive of non-white women.[15] A whole genre of novels dating from the Kaiserreich used the figure of the seducing Polish female to epitomize the spectre of a "reverse colonization" by the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe. National Socialist propaganda infused this line of attack with a more overt biopolitical emphasis. "Through her powers of attraction," wrote one Nazi author of "the Polish woman" in the 1930s, "she makes foreign men so forget themselves that they are moved to father healthy children for the benefit of the Polish community."[16] These renderings of Slavic women echoed the Germans' long-standing fascination with Eastern Europe as a place of both menace and allure, and they merged quite neatly with chauvinistic depictions of proletarian women – also symbolized with topoi of tides and floodwaters – as objects of simultaneous repulsion and attraction, fear and desire.[17] Domestic servants, of course, were widely regarded across Europe as a sexually permissive and "available" group, fetishized in novels, memoirs, and pornography despite (and because of) their regularity as a part of everyday bourgeois life.[18] It was no coincidence that the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 prohibited Jewish families from employing "Aryan" domestic servants under the age of forty-five.[19] Nor was it an accident that a disproportionate number of German women from this field were forcibly

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[13] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 334-335.

[14] Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 87-88, 95.

[15] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 102. Also see Young, *Colonial Desire*, 95.

[16] Kristin Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 93-94. The quote is from Harry K. Rosenthal, *German and Pole: National Conflict and Modern Myth* (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1976), 17.

[17] Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway, Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 181-183, 230.

[18] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 85-86.

[19] Cornelia Essner, *Die 'Nürnberger Gesetze', oder, Die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 134-154.

sterilized by the Nazis – as high as 36.6 percent of all sterilizations in Munich – usually with a diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness" grounded in accusations of promiscuity.[20] These sexualized perceptions of domestic servants and Polish women were born from a synergy of fantasies that had already been gestating in the collective imagination for some time.

Racial selection seemed to reconcile the need for housemaids with the dictates of Nazi ideology, though it was agents of the ministerial bureaucracy, not the SS, who came up with the idea of conscripting "Germanizable" Polish girls. In February 1940, Reich Minister of Labor Franz Seldte inquired whether the RSHA would object to the deployment of "nationally Polish domestic servants" in private households in Germany; Ehlich answered that such an undertaking "must be made contingent on a fundamental racial examination," which was "absolutely necessary because police provisions, such as those decreed for Polish agricultural laborers, cannot be implemented with domestic servants."[21] Heydrich weighed in on April 1, 1940, stipulating that "the Race and Settlement Office must be included under all circumstances."[22] RuSHA officials were more than happy to oblige. Pancke informed Greifelt several weeks later that the Eignungsprüfer were ready to take on the assignment, and in late June Künzel received instructions to "register racially valuable female individuals [who] can be deployed as housemaids," though only "if they agreed to this."[23] In late July, Greifelt confirmed in a memorandum to the HSSPFs that "Germanizable Polish domestic assistants" would soon arrive in the Reich within the framework of the WED, predicting that "an importation of laborers in suitable workplaces will present no problem given the serious shortage in this profession."[24] For Himmler, the dearth of household assistance represented "one of the greatest emergencies in Germany today," a "racial-biological peril" that hindered reproduction and thereby contributed to the racial deterioration of the German *Volk*. "It is well-known," he wrote in a directive to Heydrich, Hofmann, and Greifelt dated July, 10 1941, "that very few [German] girls willingly go to a household in which there are children… the willingness of many women who are expecting children will [therefore] falter due to the bitter reality that they do not receive any girls and must do all the housework alone." At the same time, the crisis presented an opportunity to "extend the redressing of the population balance in the East and the rescue of racially valuable Nordic blood." Admitting Polish girls "of good race" into the Re-Germanization Procedure, Himmler contended, would not only supply the German nation with "racially valuable future mothers," but remove them from the

[20] Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus*, 423-427.
[21] BA NS 2/167/39-40: Ehlich to Seldte, undated.
[22] BA NS 2/61/37-38: Heydrich to Himmler, undated [April 1940].
[23] BA NS 2/61/34: Pancke to Greifelt, April 20, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/26-27: "Aktenaufzeichnung über die Mitteilungen des SS-Stf. Dr. Seitz," unsigned, June 21, 1940. The SS initially selected young ethnic German women to work as servants in the homes of high-ranking SS officers. The wives of Himmler and Heydrich employed several of these women; see BA NS 19/150/2: Best to Brandt, May 3, 1940; BA NS 19/150/4-5: Brandt to Koppe, July 13, 1940.
[24] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/3-4: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 31, 1940.

"foreign nations which they are most likely to bear children for."[25] The Hausgehilfinnen initiative thus intensified the dual demographic-genocidal dictate of the WED by striking at the very engine of the Poles' reproductive capacity.

As we have seen, the cultural and symbolic referents animating the selection of "racially valuable" Poles were already on full display during the screening of ethnic German Umsiedler in 1939 and 1940, though in each case the process was qualitatively different for female subjects, who were held to much higher standards. Not surprisingly, RuSHA officials working within the EWZ found themselves disappointed with what they found. The Eignungsprüfer stationed with Commission I, for instance, remarked that Latvian Germans, like other groups from the Baltic, evinced an "alarming amount of childlessness," "high number of bachelorettes and divorcees," "larger number of wives who are professionally employed," and "much larger proportion of young girls [who] have attended university than is the case in the Reich."[26] For him, deviation from traditional gender roles and signs of infertility signified biological degeneracy, though evidence of fecundity also raised eyebrows. The race examiners and the EWZ physicians prevented women from joining the new settler society in occupied Poland if they were sterile or "unable to perform their tasks as German mothers" for behavioral or medical reasons, yet they also conceded that "the possibility for manifestation of a hereditary illness is much higher in child-rich families than with families who do not have many children." Some functionaries protested that it would be a "great injustice" to equate these prolific matriarchs with women who were barren or had had abortions and deny them the privilege of becoming colonists in the East. Nevertheless, the decision ultimately rested with the presiding doctor, and unless it concerned "rare cases" in which "the patriarch or his spouse has healthy heredity in spite of the congenital ailment of a close relative," they usually consigned these "unfit" large families to a lower tier of their racial hierarchy.[27]

This debate exposes a fundamental contradiction between the Nazis' racialized gender stereotypes and pronatalist goals: German women were supposed to be chaste and demure, yet also had to bear as many children as possible for the nation; if they did produce a sizable brood, they left themselves open to charges of licentiousness – a characteristic of the feared Slavic woman. For this reason, EWZ personnel assumed that their job entailed investigating the sexual pasts of female Umsiedler and determining the paternity of their children.[28] Here as well they quickly get bogged down in the conceptual dissonance of a bigoted brand of sexism that reduced women to vehicles of reproduction and little more.

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[25] The directive also mentioned including girls of Ukrainian nationality from the incorporated eastern territories, though this does not appear in Himmler's formal decree in October 1941; see BA NS 19/150/32-33: Himmler to Heydrich, Hofmann, and Greifelt, July 10, 1941.

[26] BA R 69/502/2: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. I to Meixner, February 20, 1940.

[27] BA R 69/178/26-29: Meixner, "Richtlinien für die ärztliche und erbbiologische Beurteilung der Umsiedler," January 6, 1941; BA R 186/1: "Anhang zur Dienstanweisung der Gesundheitsstellen," unsigned, undated.

[28] Doris L. Bergen, "Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability: Women Outsiders in German-Occupied Europe," in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 283.

The Eignungsprüfer with Commission I asserted that "Latvian Germandom… appears to be altogether less racially valuable than Estonian Germandom," whereas Volhynian Germans, though they had intermingled with Russians and Latvians and were "far more racially mixed," were also "essentially healthier and more fecund."[29] By ascribing these qualities to Volhynian Germans in the context of racial mixing, he implied that the presumably vigorous fertility of "inferior" races was precisely what the Nazis needed, that the key to decisive success in the "ethnic struggle" lay not in the puritanical self-discipline of the German "culture-bearer," but in the unrestrained demographic power of the Slavic Flood.

These tenuous distinctions between German and Slav directly impacted the day to day methodology for identifying re-Germanizable Poles, which foregrounded an "aesthetic of the racially fit" even more emphatically when it came to women. The Eignungsprüfer generally gave higher grades to examinees they considered pretty or good-looking; they preferred women who were tall, thin, voluptuous, and athletic, with blond hair and blue eyes, traits which just so happened to correspond to the Nordic "race-type" and include physical features which boded well for procreation – pelvis-width and breast size ("an evenly tapered thorax"), for instance.[30] The race examiners appear to have operated from the sordid assumption that attractive women would emit a more potent appeal to the libido of German men, inciting them to greater feats of virility and inspiring them to breed in greater numbers. Hans F.K. Günther had argued as much in the 1920s and 1930s.[31] Yet in accordance with the priggish codes of conventional bourgeois morality, the "aesthetic of the racially fit" also propagated a "linkage between external racial markers and individual value" that reinforced suppositions of "physiologically fixed sexual character."[32] Whereas the Nordic woman incarnated a wholesome, non-sensual beauty and maternal demeanor, her "Eastern" counterpart was purportedly characterized by an unnatural, masculine appearance and vulgar physicality. The designations RuS-I and RuS-II presupposed that those who acquired them would act as paragons of the Nazis' ideal womanhood – prim, neat, hard-working, courteous, and obedient – a model set up in contradistinction to stereotypes of Polish women as lascivious, slovenly, lazy, selfish, and rebellious. This elision of racial, social, and sexual attributes was hardly an accident; Günther had patterned his image of Slavic femininity on the emancipated, androgynous "New Woman" of the interwar years and intentionally played to the panic she stirred among conservative and reactionary circles.[33] In this way, a faculty for traditional womanly tasks became intertwined with estimations of biological

[29] BA R 69/502/2: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. I to Sandberger, February 20, 1940.
[30] BA NS 2/161/1-4: Schultz, "Richtlinien zur Rassenbestimmung," undated.
[31] Richard T. Gray, *About Face: German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 233.
[32] Claudia Koonz, "'More Masculine Men, More Feminine Women': The Iconography of Nazi Racial Hatreds," in. *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*, ed. Amir Weiner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 104, 109.
[33] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 84-85.

"worth," especially for Poles whom the race examiners admitted into the WED as housemaids. Indeed, the RuSHA specifically sought out individuals with experience in domestic service.[34] One girl recalled how the distasteful routine of being "measured, described, and photographed" preceded a line of questioning that emphasized personal and professional qualifications: "they asked me about my work, whether I would be devoted, whether I was familiar with housework, what I could do, etc."[35]

To be sure, Polish women were subjected to abominable cruelty at the hands of Nazi functionaries during the "rough selection" phase at the UWZ camps. The same girl told a story of female assistants who were "true tormentors" and of men who constantly harassed their frightened subjects and menacingly brandished their canes.[36] Barbara Łukomska Chudak described an equally traumatic experience: "We arrived at the camp. They led us into an empty room. We had to strip naked, a terrible humiliation. Suddenly, more than twenty women stood bare in the cold. All the windows in the barrack were open. We asked, 'Why don't you close them?' 'No,' said the German, 'the stench of Poles is too strong.'"[37] Perhaps even more so than with male WED candidates, however, the atmosphere lightened abruptly when chosen subjects proceeded to the Aussenstelle. Young Marianna Wawrzyniak later wrote fondly of her time there and her appreciation for the "loving care" of the Eignungsprüfer.[38] An exchange from the postwar testimony of another re-Germanizable housemaid, Elli Wolfgramm, indicates not only the frank yet friendly manner in which they dealt with these young women, but also the willingness of many of them to join the *Volksgemeinschaft*:

> Q: Were you told in Łódź about the plans concerning you?
> A: Yes, Herr Schwalm told me personally, that is, he asked me first of all whether I would like to go to Germany, and I said yes.
> Q: Well, more particularly, were you told that it was a procedure of re-Germanization?
> A: Yes, Herr Schwalm told me that I would become German.
> Q: In this connection, was any threat expressed against you?
> A: No, no.
> Q: How was the treatment there in the field agency of the RuSHA itself?
> A: They were all very decent, very nice.[39]

Still, it is impossible to escape the impression that far more lecherous motives drove the classification of women than its pompous ideological reasoning suggested, motives which can be seen at their most obscene in the demeaning requirement that subjects disrobe for their examination. In order to

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[34] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/18: Dongus to Arbeitsamt Lissa, January 10, 1941; LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942.
[35] Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1944* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1987), 468.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Barbara Łukomska Chudak, interview by Jacek Kubiak and Klaus Salge, *Die blonde Provinz: Polen und der deutsche Rassenwahn*, directed by Jacek Kubiak and Klaus Salge, aired August 26, 2009, ARTE (Berlin: Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, 2009).
[38] 5/33/62b: Wawrzyniak, 10.13.41.
[39] See the testimony of Elli Wolfgramm in LOC/NMT, 808-811.

mollify the embarrassment this aroused, Himmler ordained that female Volksdeutsche should only take off their clothes in front of the responsible EWZ physician and could at least keep their underwear on, though they were still often paraded scantily clad through rooms full of men in various states of undress, since male subjects invariably had to appear fully naked.[40] Nervous that the medical evaluations would now carry greater weight than their own, the race examiners of the RuSHA began to clamor for this prerogative as well, claiming they could only ensure an accurate verdict by analyzing subjects in the nude, or as one put it, "The difficulty of the racial diagnosis lies in the investigation of women. With those of alien blood, a subject must be in at least half-naked form."[41] To square the circle, the RuSHA enlisted a batch of women doctors – Eignungsprüferinnen, as it were – to record the necessary measurements, with the dubious expectation that baring themselves for female strangers would assuage the indignation felt by the resettlers.[42] Even otherwise stalwart Nazi apparatchiks criticized the procedure as "unworthy" of ethnic Germans and questioned why they had to "put up" with it.[43]

Polish deportees, on the other hand, had to expose themselves completely to the voyeuristic male gaze of the race examiner and his imagined ideal of feminine corporeality.[44] Although Himmler instructed the Eignungsprüfer to "take the greatest consideration of the women's sense of shame," to "allow no more men than necessary to be present," and to conduct the racial exam furtively while their female assistants performed the health checkup, the screening of Polish women unquestionably became a self-empowering spectacle, and one incident in particular conveys its strange blend of prudishness and prurience with great effect. In late June 1940, the HSSPF in Franconia, Hans Döring, accompanied Künzel during the "fine selection" of a group of potential WED candidates. When the presiding female doctor asked that Döring leave the room, Künzel referred to a special dispensation from Himmler granting the HSSPFs a "one-time opportunity to observe the racial investigation in order to gain insight into the racial characteristics of these women." The head of the UWZ Health Office – none other than Dr. Ernst Fähndrich – also ordered Döring to depart, and when Künzel held fast to his justification, he stormed out of the room and vowed to take the matter to the Reichsführer-SS himself.[45] This episode showcases the type of bickering that led to the formation of a separate RuSHA office in the fall of 1940 for the express purpose of "sifting" re-

[40] BA R 186/1: Meixner, "Dienstanweisung der EWZ Gesundheitsstellen," undated; USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/174: Malsen to Ehlich, September 30, 1943. Also see Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit und Umsiedlungspolitik 1939-1945: Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Auslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006), 194.

[41] Ibid. The quote comes from BA R 69/599/159: Amberger, "Bericht der RuS-Dienststelle in EWZ Kommission VII," December 21, 1940.

[42] BA NS 2/46/35-36: Hofmann to Müller, October 20, 1941. Also see Andreas Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1939-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 115.

[43] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/174: Malsen to Ehlich, September 30, 1943.

[44] BA NS 2/22/46: Hofmann to RuS-Führer and Eignungsprüfer, August 4, 1942.

[45] Schwalm related this incident to Hofmann in July 1940; see BDC SSO/194: Personnel File on Dr. Ernst Fändrich.

Germanizable Poles. Yet it also illustrates the perverse competition different Nazi agencies engaged in over the right to scrutinize female bodies.

As it turned out, these intra-SS quarrels seem mild in comparison to a similar though much larger and more acrimonious contest between Himmler's subordinates and representatives of the labor administration and the Nazi Party. The Eignungsprüfer were not the only ones sending "Germanizable" Polish girls to the Reich to work as domestic servants. Sometime in the early spring of 1940, the Labor Office in Łódź established an independent operation, wherein a team of public health doctors and examiners from the Racial Policy Office led by Dr. Walter Schnell, professor of racial hygiene at the University of Halle, examined young women for this purpose as well – a move which arguably prompted Himmler to form his own Hausgehilfinnen initiative in the first place. Although the Labor Ministry did consult the Reich Security Main Office beforehand, Heydrich adamantly refused to give his consent to the program and blasted the methods of the RPA as "very superficial."[46] As we saw above, he and Ehlich, along with Greifelt and Pancke, insisted that the RuSHA alone had jurisdiction over the determination of "racial belonging." They would have to move quickly to safeguard this position, for in May 1940, apparently unsatisfied with the Party's previous gains, Bormann advocated the involvement of the RPA in the selection of all WED candidates. Pancke rejected this idea outright; in his view, the officials of the Racial Policy Office, whom he pegged as theoreticians and propagandists, were wholly unqualified to perform racial examinations. Himmler agreed and forced a resolution of the issue in favor of his men.[47] On June 21, 1940, superiors in Berlin ordered Künzel to evaluate all the girls whom the RPA had previously declared "racially valuable" in cooperation with Schnell, this time using the RuSHA typology, though added that "Independent activity on the part of Professor Schnell cannot be tolerated." To them, the imprimatur of the Racial Policy Office counted for next to nothing; unless approved by the Eignungsprüfer, these housemaids would still be deported to the General Government.[48]

Beset by increased demand for domestic servants, the Labor Office in Łódź resorted to a number of schemes to circumvent the SS. In collaboration with their colleagues in the Reich, they allocated re-Germanizable servant girls to private households before the Gestapo had a chance to vet the families in question. What was worse, they often imported young women whom the RuSHA never assessed. Responding to these evasions in the late summer of 1940, Künzel suggested a formal arrangement with the Labor Ministry that gave precedence to the "political fitness" of employers rather than any "economic and social entitlement"; otherwise the possibility existed that "the Germanization process will be complicated or impeded by improper political and social conduct." He also called for a "corresponding

[46] BA NS 2/61/37-38: Heydrich to Himmler, undated [April 1940].

[47] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/32: Pancke to Himmler, May 25, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/31: Brandt to Pancke, June 3, 1940.

[48] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/26-27: "Aktenaufzeichnung über die Mitteilungen des SS-Stf. Dr. Seitz," unsigned, June 21, 1940.

prohibition on the settlement of non-Germanizable domestic servants in German households."[49] At the RKF Staff Main Office, Bethge likewise argued that "*only Germanizable domestic servants* should be settled in the Old Reich."[50] Labor officials took little heed of their opinions. In January 1941, Dongus had to remind the Labor Office in Brandenburg that "in contrast to the other Polish women, who are deported from the Reich after a certain time, re-Germanizable persons can eventually acquire German citizenship… Consequently, the household in which they work must guarantee that the Germanization process takes place in a politically correct manner."[51] The following month, in a letter to the Labor Office in Kalisz, he reiterated that "the examination of Polish women on their capacity for re-Germanization must be carried out by the RuSHA."[52]

Greifelt recognized that investigations of potential hosts were a burden on the machinery of labor deployment, and that the required number of housemaids far outstripped the amount being supplied by the race inspectors, who had accepted only 3 to 5 percent of all the girls they examined as of February 1942.[53] Yet he refused to compromise Himmler's principles. Writing to Seldte that month, he maintained the standpoint that the "the ideological and educational suitability of the employers stands in the foreground during the selection of workplaces." A man who would later recall how Polish girls made up a "reservoir" of cheap domestic labor in the days of his childhood, Greifelt justified the rigorous standards of the RuSHA by alluding to the Slavic Flood:

> I am aware that through this type of selection the number of girls who can be deployed in the Reich has seriously diminished. However, I must draw attention to the extraordinary ethnic-political dangers that would arise from the inundation (*Überschwemmung*) of Germany with foreign, especially Polish, laborers… Therefore, I cannot agree to the deployment of domestic servants other than those who are racially examined and identified as capable of Germanization.[54]

Just as the race and resettlement experts of the SS thought they had neutralized the meddling of their rivals, the Nazi Party bureaucracy redoubled its efforts to usurp their authority. In a letter to Greiser dated February 15, 1941, Bormann not only commended the ongoing work of the Racial Policy Office in the Warthegau, but proposed that NSDAP branches implement similar measures in all of the incorporated eastern territories.[55] Upon learning of these intentions – Greiser passed on Bormann's letter to HSSPF Koppe, who relayed it to the RuSHA – Schwalm issued a forceful protest and urged Greifelt to "inform the Party offices in question that the Aussenstelle of the RuSHA alone is responsible for the selection of

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[49] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/8-10: Künzel to Greifelt, September 6, 1940.

[50] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Besprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940 [emphasis in original].

[51] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/26: Dongus to Arbeitsamt Brandenburg, January 13, 1941.

[52] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/205: Dongus to Arbeitsamt Kalisch, February 10, 1941.

[53] LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942.

[54] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/70-72: Greifelt to Seldte, March 3, 1941. Also see Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 796.

[55] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/4: Bormann to Greiser, February 15, 1941.

re-Germanizable Poles… only the racial verdict of the Aussenstelle has validity." It was "urgently necessary to undertake steps as quickly as possible," he counseled, "in order to prevent the Party from intervening."[56] This heated opposition still failed to rein in the Labor Office in Łódź and their RPA collaborators. In late July 1941, RuSHA examiners inspected eight Polish housemaids near Hamburg and discovered that none of them were "capable of Germanization."[57] Schwalm filed another complaint with Greifelt in August: "It has been repeatedly determined that employees of the labor administration have allotted domestic servants in contravention of clear decrees and orders." He again pressed for the termination of all such "special actions," because "beyond the fact that the girls have not been assessed on their capability for Germanization, the workplaces have not been approved by the HSSPFs."[58]

Greifelt, however, was now prepared to make some minor concessions, not least because by then Himmler too had begun to grow impatient with the tiny number of servants endorsed by the RuSHA. He persuaded Schwalm and his Eignungsprüfer to forego the cumbersome practice of investigating all the family members of each prospective conscript, though he accommodated their concerns by proposing that all young female examinees should bring along photographs of their parents and siblings so as to "reduce the danger of misjudgments, which undoubtedly exists in examinations of individuals without their relatives." "In this way," he reported to Himmler in August 1941, "about 300 girls who are suitable for Germanization were procured for household service in the last few months." He also recommended periodically dispatching inspectors from the Aussenstelle to look for candidates in regions of Poland outside of the Warthegau, as well as in the recently conquered Baltic states, where there were "large numbers of racially suitable girls" who could be amassed through a "thorough combing."[59] But despite his best efforts, Greifelt could not thwart the machinations of Nazi labor officials, who continued to transport girls to Germany under the nose of the SS.

Faced with repeated interference in one of his favorite hobbyhorses, Himmler finally stepped in on October 1, 1941 with a directive that formalized the Re-Germanization Procedure as the sole legitimate avenue for the recruitment of Polish domestic servants. In the same document, he also took up Greifelt's suggestion and expanded the program to encompass the General Government and the rest of the incorporated eastern territories as well as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, opening up new sources of manpower and enlarging the scope of the "hunt for good blood."[60] Three weeks later, the Reich Labor Ministry caved, distributing to all subordinate offices a circular that gave SS officers what they wanted: a guarantee that "only those ethnically Polish women who have been examined by the RuSHA in Litzmannstadt [Łódź] may be placed in households in the Reich territories." However, although labor

[56] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/1-2: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, March 15, 1941.
[57] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/42: Klinger to Schwalm, July 28, 1941.
[58] USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/12-13: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, August 26, 1941.
[59] LOC/NMT, 784-787, Doc. NO-2481: Greifelt to Himmler (English transcript), August 2, 1941.
[60] BA R 49/73/66-67: Himmler, "Anordnung Nr. 51/I," October 1, 1941.

officials were technically "no longer allowed to transfer ethnically Polish domestic servants to Germany… without including the responsible agencies of the Reichsführer-SS," they ignored this provision and continued to do so anyway.[61] In February 1942, Gauleiter Greiser tried to put a stop to their chicanery once and for all. Based on his instructions, a new arrangement soon emerged that seemed to satisfy the competing claims of the RuSHA and its adversaries: RPA and Public Health officials assigned to the Labor Office henceforth surveyed all unemployed teenage girls in the Warthegau and submitted lists of those "whose capability for Germanization can be assumed with some certainty" to the Aussenstelle for a conclusive decision.[62]

Once again, the Eignungsprüfer thought they had resolved the controversy in their favor; once again, they were mistaken. On March 4, 1942, Himmler bemoaned continued interference in an angry message to Greifelt and Heydrich: "I hear that many locations in Germany are being supplied with Polish girls by the Labor Office. This is obviously done without us… The object I have pursued in bringing Polish girls to Germany is totally left out of consideration. Only girls of good blood who are selected by the RuSHA and truly capable of Germanization should be taken."[63] The Eignungsprüfer refused to cater to the quotas of the Reich Labor Ministry and shrugged off any suggestion that they dilute their stringent qualifications. When an increased number of German civilians and state officials filed applications for re-Germanizable housemaids in the autumn of 1942, Dongus responded by brusquely telling his superiors, "At present this wish cannot be fulfilled because no domestic servants are available. RuS-I's are extraordinarily rare."[64] The technocrats of the RKF Staff Main Office concurred with the imperative to keep membership in the WED as exclusive as possible. In the summer of 1942, one of them acknowledged the "considerable demand for re-Germanizable housemaids," yet corroborated that they were "only available in very small numbers" and had to be reserved "for the most urgent cases involving child-rich families."[65] Fed up with this parsimonious stance, some applicants in the Reich began trying to pilfer Hausgehilfinnen from the employers to whom they had been assigned.[66]

At first glance, the conflict that erupted over the importation of Polish domestic servants looks like a textbook example of the tension between ideology and political economy that bedeviled the National Socialist regime throughout the Second World War, with the SS lining up on one side, the NSDAP and the Labor Ministry on the other. This would be a facile misreading. There was no

[61] BA R 49/73/68: Hamann to Landesarbeitsämter, October 20, 1941; NS 47/29: Grohmann, "Verwaltungsbericht der Abteilung Erb- und Rassenpflege," December 15, 1941.

[62] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/62: Döpke to Arbeitsämter in Wartheland, January 19, 1942. For further information on this process, see Karsten Linne, "Die deutsche Arbeitsverwaltung am Beispiel Warthegau," in *Pflicht, Zwang und Gewalt. Arbeitsverwaltungen und Arbeitskräftepolitik im deutsch besetzen Polen und Serbien 1939-1944*, eds. Floran Dierl, Zoran Janjetović, and Karsten Linne (Essen: Klartext, 2013), 116.

[63] BA NS 19/2377/2: Himmler to Greifelt, March 4, 1942.

[64] USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/9: Dongus to Klinger, September 3, 1942.

[65] BA R 49/73/130-131: Stier to Hofmann, Ehlich, and HSSPFs, July 28, 1942.

[66] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/92: Stier to Hofmann, June 2, 1942.

fundamental ideological disparity that separated these factions; each gravitated toward a complementary mission of inclusion and exclusion, aiming to enhance "racially valuable" population growth while inoculating the German body politic from "inferior" elements. They obviously disagreed over who was most qualified to manage said tasks and who should reap the political benefits that accrued therefrom, but they were both chasing after the same chimera: to stem the degeneration of the German *Volk* and indemnify its demographic vigor in perpetuity. As Ulrich Herbert has pointed out, neither the war economy nor the daily chores of German housewives provided a truly compelling reason to impress foreigners for domestic service. The Nazis almost certainly calculated that furnishing these girls to German families would endear them to the regime and offset potential disenchantment by involving them in the project of racial reclamation and delivering "an upper-middle-class status symbol at an affordable price."[67] But it was also part and parcel of a larger attempt to address popular longings for a bygone era that never actually existed, a time of national unity in which women "knew their place," the lower classes accepted their station, and cultural outsiders kept to the margins, a Germany denuded of menacing ethnic rivals and subversive political movements like feminism, Marxism, and democracy, whose ascent seemed to augur the destruction of traditional moral values and the collapse of civilization itself. The aggregate of fantasies and anxieties that underlay this shared vision shaped both the template the SS devised for the re-Germanization of women as well as the manner in which ordinary people .carried it out.

To the Nazis, female WED candidates symbolized the unique virtues of German women as well as their vulnerability to moral corruption, personifying both the racial superiority of the German *Volk* as well as the agent of cultural pollution, the Madonna and the Whore. Their portrayal as "racially valuable" maidens and matrons corresponded with the assumption that they remained latent standard-bearers of the Polish national movement and potential enemies of Germandom. One SD officer in Poznań expounded on this gendered variation of the myth of "lost German blood" when he asserted that "Racially valuable Polish women only very rarely engage in intimate relations with Germans. They are too proud for this and reject such behavior on account of their national consciousness."[68] His statement demonstrates the essentially malleable nature of Nazi racial categories, the way in which concrete human behavior by turns contradicted and reinforced preexisting stereotypes, rendering ostensibly fixed mental dichotomies dangerously fluid. Though normally painted as a savage, emasculating temptress out to enslave German men, here the Slavic woman possesses talents to which her German opposite should aspire, a figure of begrudging admiration due to her sexual austerity and uncompromising ethnic loyalty, which, in the case of "racially valuable Polish women," impedes the aim of "desirable population growth." "Saving" re-Germanizable women from the forces of *Polentum* thus appeared all the more imperative – lest they

[67] Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 188-189.

[68] USHMMA 15.021M/2/15/5-10: Damzog to Ohlendorf, January 17, 1942.

spread Polonization among unsuspecting Germans or deny their reproductive vitality in favor of other nations. But it would also presumably be even more difficult than with men.

The special urgency attached to the re-Germanization of women, especially those of childbearing age, can be seen in the markedly higher degree of control the SS exercised over the geographical distribution of girls selected to work as Hausgehilfinnen. The race experts of the RuSHA fretted constantly about deploying them in territories east of the Elbe River, and one major source of contention between the SS and the Labor Ministry stemmed from the propensity of the latter to send them to Berlin anyway without consulting the RKF Staff Main Office or the regional HSSPF, August Heissmeyer.[69] Outside of the imperial capital and its environs – the obvious seat of many Nazi officials and their families – these women only rarely lived in regions adjacent to the borders of the former Polish state. The managers of the WED also greatly feared billeting them in cities, especially the more cosmopolitan ones, and when this became inevitable due to the naturally higher volume of demand there, they specifically avoided working-class districts, usually placing them with doctors in the more affluent suburbs. As of February 1942, only 521 "racially valuable" Polish housemaids resided in urban areas. When tabulated among the 6,818 re-Germanizable domestic servants who worked in the Reich between May 1940 and December 1942, the number only rose to 1,127.[70] Hofmann validated this tendency with the argument that "Re-Germanization proceeds much more smoothly in the countryside. The girls, who are in every respect still impressionable, are exposed to extraordinary dangers in the cities."[71] In the words of Rudolf Creutz, Greifelt's deputy, dispatching the vast majority of these young women to farmsteads in the provinces would also forestall "an increase of migration from rural to urban areas."[72] At one point in early 1942, Bethge even decreed a three-month ban on the deployment of housemaids in Berlin, permitting exceptions during the interim only in "especially exigent individual cases."[73] In addition to ethnic and religious animosities, the spatial dimension of the Re-Germanization Procedure also drew on more diffuse contemporary anxieties surrounding the "big city" and its seemingly debilitating moral and physiological impact on the idyllic German peasant.

This perception of heightened fragility and anticipation of backsliding led the race and resettlement experts of the SS to concoct a formal program of assimilation for young female candidates,

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[69] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/8-10: Künzel to Greifelt, September 6, 1940.

[70] LOC/NMT, 787-788, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942; LOC/NMT, 789-790, Doc. NO-2480: Creutz to Brandt (English transcript), December 22, 1942. Unfortunately there is no comprehensive data on the overall number of re-Germanizable housemaids, though Isabel Heinemann estimates a figure of approximately 10,000; see Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 482-483. It should be noted that the amount for December 1942 includes women who were not sent to the Reich specifically for domestic work. The RKF found it impractical to create an independent census for domestic servants in rural areas because most women there worked in the fields and in the house as needed.

[71] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/113-114: Hofmann to Rüterbusch, July 10, 1942.

[72] LOC/NMT, 789-790, Doc. NO-2480: Creutz to Brandt (English transcript), December 22, 1942.

[73] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/81: Bethge to Heissmeyer, May 5, 1942.

the emphases of which can likewise be traced to the cultural attitudes of earlier historical epochs. In the years following the First World War, German publicists often framed the loss of territory in Poland and elsewhere in the language of sexual violation, with female ethnic Germans serving as the figurative victims of this "rape," cut off from their "homeland" and left helpless to fend off an onslaught of hostile nationalities.[74] In view of the profound alarm created by wartime demographic losses, a declining birthrate, and the presumed hyper-fecundity of the Slavs, the need for these women to preserve their German identity was regarded as a matter of national existence. They became the focal point for a dramatic upsurge of missionary activism in the eastern borderlands that mainly consisted of imparting guidance on pre- and post-natal care mixed in with heavy doses of *völkisch* education – a campaign extended to ethnic German resettlers by Nazi women's organizations after the outbreak of the Second World War.[75] Following from this tradition, the SS compelled all single re-Germanizable women to take part in cultural activities organized by the National Socialist Women's League (*Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft*, NSF) and German Women's Work (*Deutsches Frauenwerk*, DFW). Every four to six weeks they attended gatherings designed to "ease their transition into the German environment and slowly lead them toward Germandom," primarily by teaching them the German language through "communal games" and group readings while inculcating them with the Nazi worldview through "systematic educational work." These meetings also offered "a good opportunity for the observation of the individuals," and the DFW submitted continuous reports on their "progress" to the RuSHA and the RKF Staff Main Office.[76] The re-Germanization of young women was apparently too importance to place in the hands of private citizens alone. With respect to the Hausgehilfinnen, Himmler himself outlined a pedagogical regimen of "extract[ing] these ethnically alien girls of good blood for the racially-based German ethnic community through education, guidance, and language training."[77]

Elizabeth Harvey has recently demonstrated the significance of conventional notions of domesticity to the Nazis' colonial mission in the East, where "strengthening *Deutschtum* and ensuring its domination at the point where it appeared challenged or compromised by the presence of a rival culture… meant ensuring that German home life flourished and conformed to bourgeois notions of thrift, orderliness, and cleanliness."[78] The same priority imbued the prescribed methods of re-Germanization for "racially valuable" Polish women, who were supposed to exhibit a higher standard of living in their "clothing, external appearance, orderliness of the house, and domestic hygiene" as well as adopt what Nancy Reagin refers to as "a particular domestic identity that was interwoven with the period's dominant

[74] Annemarie H. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914-1922* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 96-97.

[75] Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East*, 1-5.

[76] BA NS 44/37: Deutsches Frauenwerk, "Rundschreiben FW 145/41," sig. illegible, December 19, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/1: Klinger to Dongus, July 7, 1942; BA R 49/73/88: Bethge to Rüterbusch, December 2, 1941.

[77] BA NS 19/150/32-33: Himmler to Heydrich, Hofmann, and Greifelt, July 10, 1941.

[78] Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East*, 3.

notions of gender."[79] The Hausgehilfinnen initiative in particular harked back to earlier Nazi conceptions of domestic service as an ideal training ground where female adolescents could learn the skills required of housewives and mothers.[80] Young women chosen to participate had to display "good moral character" and work "in perfect form" as servants, cooks, and nannies for a term of three to five years before they could apply for German citizenship.[81] The offices of German Women's Work also regularly sent social workers to homes that employed these girls in order to advise female hosts on how to behave toward them and confirm the propriety of their "domestic counseling and supervision."[82] By promoting this essentialized equation between Germanness and housekeeping, the Nazis linked the habitus of re-Germanization to episodes of overseas imperialism in which ideals of domesticity had also supplied a crucial empirical index for defining race and justifying hegemony.[83]

What is perhaps most striking about this process is that it championed traditional women's roles as markers of German racial identity yet also sponsored a curiously progressive framework of socio-political empowerment and professional elevation. It coupled older liberal-bourgeois concepts of "self-cultivation" (*Bildung*) and classist understandings of "proper" home life – already cast in ethnocentric tones during the Kaiserreich – with a racialized platform of social integration, legal enfranchisement, and upward mobility, albeit one in which cultural genocide and nationalization functioned as two sides of the same coin. Himmler's adjutant, Rudolf Brandt, delineated the crux of this approach in the following terms: "These future mothers of good blood are to renounce their foreign ethnicity, which means social advancement if they have the opportunity to work as servant girls in Germany."[84]

At the same time, the ambivalent ethnicity and presumed biological "value" of the re-Germanizables dictated especially compulsive micro-management of issues concerning marriage and reproduction. This mandate also derived from the legacy of sexual politics in Germany's former colonial possessions. In no small measure because right-wing *völkisch* groups in the metropole had lobbied for it so vociferously, German Southwest Africa saw sweeping legislation in 1905 that prohibited interracial unions, with the official justification being to thwart a "dangerous mixing of blood."[85] Such restrictions

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[79] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/221-226: Bracht, "Anordnung A 71," April 27, 1942. The second quote is from Nancy R. Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

[80] Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung," 157-158.

[81] BA NS 19/150/32-33: Himmler to Heydrich, Hofmann, and Greifelt, July 10, 1941.

[82] BA NS 44/37: Deutsches Frauenwerk, "Rundschreiben FW 27/41," sig. illegible, March 21, 1941.

[83] Nancy R. Reagin, "German Brigadoon? Domesticity and Metropolitan Perceptions of Auslandsdeutschen in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 249-250, 256-258. Also see Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 144.

[84] BA NS 19/150/42: Brandt to Greifelt, August 31, 1941.

[85] Annegret Ehmann, "From Colonial Racism to Nazi Population Policy: The Role of the So-called Mischlinge," in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, and the Reexamined*, eds. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 115, 122-123; George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 218,

were hardly confined to the dominions of the German Empire – indeed, similar laws came into effect all over the colonial world – nor were they a relic of the past. By the 1940s, anti-miscegenation statutes in the United States had long since criminalized matrimony between partners of different racial backgrounds, while American eugenicists continued their astonishingly successful campaign to prevent marriages involving citizens deemed physically or mentally "unfit."[86] All of these various measures bore a remarkable likeness to how the Nazis went about policing the sexuality of "racially valuable ethnic aliens." In the first place, the SS banned intimate relationships of any kind with "pure" Poles and other "racially inferior" foreigners.[87] Re-Germanizables were also explicitly forbidden from wedding one another, though here Hofmann at least countenanced a modicum of flexibility.[88] When Schwalm called for an official injunction against marriages between WED candidates in March 1941, the RuSHA chief overruled him, declaring these unions to be "only undesirable in general," not categorically. When it came to German citizens, by contrast, marriage was positively encouraged, for Hofmann and his colleagues believed it would greatly accelerate assimilation, not to mention facilitate the goal of increasing "desirable population growth."[89] To put it another way, the RuSHA endeavored to realize schemes of controlled breeding and "Nordification" that German scientists had recommended for decades.

In this policy field as in so many others, however, a default setting of bureaucratic rigmarole and governmental infighting subverted the pursuit of cherished ideological objectives. Just like any German national, WED candidates had to register their intent to wed with local civil servants as well as procure a certificate of "hereditary fitness" from the public health offices (no matter how much the Eignungsprüfer insisted that their own assessments rendered the latter precondition superfluous).[90] They also had to obtain the blessing of the HSSPFs, who instructed the Landräte to submit all such marriage applications for their personal approval on the grounds that they occupied the best position to ascertain whether a given subject represented a "suitable" conjugal partner thanks to the meticulous behavioral reports accumulated by the Gestapo.[91] Nevertheless, employees at the Race Office suspected that the Interior Ministry never even notified provincial administrators about this obligation. Hoping to rectify this state of affairs and expand their authority yet further, Hofmann and his associates pressured Greifelt to draft a decree that vested the

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225; Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and Settler Identities in Namibia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), 39.

[86] Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135-138.

[87] LOC/NMT, 645. In July 1942, an official decree banned marriages between Polish "protected members" and Germanizable Poles; see Diemut Majer, *"Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), 124

[88] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/26-27: "Aktenaufzeichnung über die Mitteilungen des SS-Stf. Dr. Seitz," June 21, 1940.

[89] USHMMA 15.021M/6/47/1: Klinger to Greifelt, May 5, 1941.

[90] Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 81; Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 52-53, 56.

[91] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 110-115: Gutenberger to Regierungspräsident Aachen, March 1, 1944; HStW 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 177-178: Waldeck to Landräte and Oberbürgermeister in Hesse, April 20, 1944.

Eignungsprüfer with the right to adjudicate all prospective marriages between Germans and non-Germans and thereby "prevent racially selected persons from engaging in marriages with racially inferior persons" as well as "make sure that no valuable German blood is left out."[92]

For the most part though, the SS showed extreme reticence about signing off on marital unions between WED candidates and German "ethnic comrades." On the one hand, the race and resettlement experts clearly sponsored these marriages, and the HSSPFs definitely consented to them on numerous occasions.[93] They also struggled to modify the patrilineal alignment of existing citizenship laws, which stripped any German woman of her nationality should she choose to wed a re-Germanizable Pole since the latter were (tellingly) stateless for all intents and purposes. RuSHA personnel criticized this caveat time and again; they saw no reason to deny male WED candidates the same standing as Volksdeutsche, let alone to divest German women of their civil rights simply because they had fallen in love.[94] Yet despite their repeated attempts to overhaul the naturalization system, this problem was never resolved.[95] On the other hand, Himmler's henchmen greatly feared the ramifications of granting premature acceptance into the *Volksgemeinschaft* via matrimony. Because marriage would automatically grant unrestricted German citizenship to female inductees, deliberating on their applications amounted to making a definitive judgment on whether they had been successfully re-Germanized. It also entailed releasing them from the direct oversight of the police, though the SS prevailed upon Party offices to monitor these women after their naturalization.[96] In most cases, however, the HSSPFs decided not to take the risk. Although there are no comprehensive figures to quantify the frequency of these marriages, the available evidence suggests that only a small minority of aspirants gained the necessary endorsements, even though the relatively sizable number of engagements indicates that at least some Germans regarded these people as perfectly suitable conjugal partners. Himmler explicitly ordained that the Hausgehilfinnen could only marry after completing a three-to-five year probationary period, despite the implicit intention to have them replace "racially inferior" Polish women as objects of desire for German men.[97] Given their shared domestic space with German families, in fact, the Reichsführer-SS considered it even more essential to regulate their sexuality.

Nazi officials and German civilians alike viewed male WED candidates with similar suspicions, and here too older preoccupations with the sexual threat of Slavic peoples stood at the forefront of their

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[92] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/170-171: Klinger to Greifelt, November 17, 1942; BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[93] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 154: Landrat Jülich to Regierungspräsident Aachen, April 5, 1944; LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 167: "Einsatzliste SS-District West," June 1, 1944. Also see the deployment lists for SS-District Mitte for July 1943, November 1943, and November 1944 in NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim, Acc. 132/90, Nr. 202.

[94] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[95] BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," May 18, 1944.

[96] BA R 49/73/130-131: Stier to Hofmann, Ehlich, and HSSPFs, July 28, 1942.

[97] BA NS 19/150/32-33: Himmler to Heydrich, Hofmann, and Greifelt, July 10, 1941.

concerns. In Fulda, for instance, Stanislaus Olejniczak was accused of engaging in "forbidden intimate relations" with his employer, Lina Wehner, and though the police exonerated him of wrongdoing after writing off the allegation as "merely the gossip of the people," they interrogated no less than six independent witnesses to uncover the truth. Athough re-Germanizables were technically exempt from the prohibition on sexual intercourse between Polish men and German women, it certainly made Stanislaus look much worse when rumors surfaced of additional affairs with local Soviet forced laborers.[98] Needless to say, this level of interference in the most sensitive of personal matters had devastating emotional consequences for the individuals in question. Take the experience of Felix Trynka, who wrote to Dongus at the Aussenstelle in early1943 to request a certificate that entitled him to marry his ethnic German lover. "The National Socialist German Worker's Party has forbidden my fiancée from marrying me," he complained, "because I am not a German, but a Pole"; he asked indignantly "for clarification as to whether I can marry a German girl or not."[99] These kinds of entreaties apparently failed to move the race and resettlement experts. On July 28, 1942, during a meeting at the headquarters of the RSHA in Berlin, representatives from each of the major SS offices concurred unanimously that all re-Germanizables would have to wait a full year following their admission into the program before applying for naturalization.[100]

The same excessively cautious and schizophrenic attitude figured largely even (and especially) when female candidates performed their assigned duty as "racially valuable future mothers." The Landrat in Fulda, for instance, reported approvingly to the Gestapo in July 1943 that young Ursula Lamcha had given birth to the child of a German soldier.[101] Yet when Schwalm learned about the pregnancy of Stanislawa Kowalska in Württemberg in early 1941, he directed local authorities to keep him apprised on her condition and pass on any pertinent news. More ominously, someone at the Aussenstelle had discussed with Kowalska's hosts whether she ought to be sent back to the incorporated eastern territories or deported to the General Government.[102] As we shall see in the next section, the atmosphere of extreme sexual paranoia surrounding these issues of deployment, assimilation, marriage, and reproduction came to define the everyday experiences and interactions of the young women selected to be housemaids.

To an even greater extent than its parent program, the Hausgehilfinnen initiative quickly started to resemble an enterprise of human trafficking.[103] The Labor Office in Łódź secretly furnished "racially valuable" servant girls to friends, Party bigwigs, and influential businessmen in the Reich, much to the

[98] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 17: Gendarmerie Bronnzell to Landrat Fulda, March 25, 1942; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 28: Gendarmerie Fulda to Landrat Fulda, June 14, 1944; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 29: Landrat Fulda to Gestapo Kassel, July 18, 1944.
[99] 5/35/142: Trynka, 2.23.43.
[100] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/170-171: Klinger to Greifelt, November 17, 1942.
[101] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 64: Landrat Fulda to Gestapo Kassel, July, 1943.
[102] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/137-138: Schwalm to Kaul, January 28, 1941.
[103] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 290-291.

chagrin of the race examiners, even though they were prone to the same kind of favoritism.[104] Many of these girls ended up in the households of high-ranking SS officers. Hofmann employed one at his home in Berlin, as did the notorious Einsatzgruppe commander Otto Ohlendorf.[105] In Arolsen, Elli Wolfgramm worked at the ancestral estate of the HSSPF for SS-District Fulda-Werra, Josias Erbprinz zu Waldeck.[106] Officials at the Aussenstelle also gave precedence to their colleagues within the RuSHA. In the summer of 1942, the Race Office ordered Dongus to accelerate the processing of two girls earmarked for the wives of a pair of Eignungsprüfer who would soon leave for the front.[107] There was more to this than pure cronyism, however; in all likelihood, these women had already passed an RuSHA racial assessment as a prerequisite for admission into the SS "family community" (*Sippengemeinschaft*), and who could be more "politically reliable" than SS families? With that being said, many Germans were eager to acquire the services of a "racially valuable" housemaid too, and any family with at least three children under the age of fourteen could apply for one. The HSSPFs fielded applications from all over, with the RuSHA sometimes acting as a go-between. Schwalm put Margarete Schwarz in touch with Waldeck after receiving an inquiry she sent to the Aussenstelle in early 1941.[108] In June of that year, Hofmann counseled Else Schmidt to contact HSSPF Heissmeyer in Berlin, who would handle the details, though he also pledged to do what he could to assist her.[109] He also helped procure a Hausgehilfin for an old friend who took an interest after observing that the behavior of Hofmann's maid, Josepha Pieszak, stood in stark contrast to that of his own "irresponsible" German servant girl.[110]

The evidence reveals several pieces of general information about these young women that go a long way to explaining how they reacted to their newfound circumstances. Most of them were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, as per Himmler's instructions, though some were as young as fourteen and others as old as twenty.[111] Although the Nazis put a premium on recruiting trained servants, many of these girls had little to no previous domestic experience. The huge majority came from the Warthegau, and it appears that many had never left home or been on their own before.[112] Nearly all of them had Polish names and did not speak German at the time of their resettlement.

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[104] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/8-10: Künzel to Greifelt, September 6, 1940.

[105] USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/14: Rösener to Schwalm, August 14, 1941; BA NS 2/81/171-172: Hofmann to Heissmeyer, September 25, 1942.

[106] LOC/NMT, 808-811.

[107] USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/5: Klinger to Dongus, July 31, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/7: Klinger to Dongus, August 19, 1942.

[108] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/35: Schwalm to Schwarz, January 15, 1941.

[109] BA NS 2/45/193-194: Hofmann to Schmidt, June 19, 1941.

[110] USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/3: Heimstädt to Hofmann, March 24, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/2: Rödel to Dongus, April 30, 1942.

[111] BA NS 19/150/42: Brandt to Greifelt, August 31, 1941; 5/33/41: Kuleczko, 17.9.41; 5/33/47: Brzoskowska, undated.

[112] LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942.

Nevertheless, like other WED candidates, many of the housemaids openly identified themselves with the German *Volk* and the National Socialist cause, and several even asked for permission to join the League of German Maidens (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*, BDM), the female equivalent of the Hitler Youth.[113] "I will always have my true heart with you and the state," Waclawa Pieta proclaimed in a letter to Schwalm, "[I am] ready to sacrifice not only my heart, but all my thoughts and everything I live for to my new fatherland."[114] Once again, such vocal pronouncements were often based on the material conditions of everyday life. Wolfgramm testified that her tenure in Arolsen was "a very good job" because she was "treated as a German proper" and "received clothing cards and food, exactly like the Germans."[115] Regina Sobon expressed similar satisfaction with her "beautiful and clean" room in the Rumpel household: "I like it here very much and I do not regret that I have come here."[116] At the same time, it is clear that such feelings of contentment were also predicated on the tenor of personal relationships, on the degree to which Germans treated them with dignity and integrated them into their social circles. Young Zofia Pieskarska later remembered her time in Germany as follows: "I was directed to the household of a German doctor. I worked for him as a maid, but I was treated as a social equal. I ate with them, traveled with them, and went with them to the movies and the theater."[117] Having "got to know some good people" and having "only German acquaintances" also inspired Marianna Wawrzyniak's conversion into "a good patriot for our German fatherland."[118] For Bronislawa Steczak, the Hessian town of Edelzell became a "second homeland." "I have devoted myself to Germany with all of my heart," she wrote to the Aussenstelle, "I have German friends in Edelzell and I have settled in so well that I truly have more love for Edelzell than for my own home."[119] Irena Jasinska likewise affirmed that she had "grown very fond" of the "good people" to whom the SS had assigned her. "I now see that German blood flows inside of me," she told Schwalm, "I love Germany, and if necessary I would fight [for Germany] as a soldier."[120]

Many "racially valuable" Polish housemaids enunciated key aspects of National Socialist ideology as well, especially its anti-urban slant and romantic reverence for the majesty of the German landscape. Apparently they were quick studies. "It is so beautiful here," wrote Stanislawa Geloch of the forests in Brandenburg, "that I think I'm already in heaven… there are none of the disadvantages of a large city."[121] Some candidates even showed a certain familiarity with the physiognomic criteria of racial selection. In one letter, Wawrzyniak implored the Eignungsprüfer to screen her sister, who was "treated

[113] 5/33/50: Konrad, 10.5.41; 5/35/49: Jasinska, 25.6.42.
[114] 5/33/108-109: Pieta, 11.21.41.
[115] LOC/NMT, 808-811.
[116] 5/32/118: Sobon, 7.5.41.
[117] NARA/NMT M894/15/5269: Testimony of Zofia Pieskarska, undated.
[118] 5/33/62b: Wawrzyniak, 10.13.41.
[119] 5/34/114-115: Steczak, undated.
[120] 2/20a/102: Jasinska, 6.24.41.
[121] 5.35.46: Geloch, 6.25.42.

like a Pole" yet had blond hair and blue eyes and was thus "definitely a racially suitable girl." Another young woman, Maria Wlazinska, pointed to the "Nordic features" of her cousin as proof of the girl's eligibility for re-Germanization and beseeched Dongus to "fulfill my wish to remove her from the hell in which she finds herself."[122] The motivation behind these acts of generosity probably had more to do with securing preferential treatment for family members than outright ideological fervor. As Michele Mouton has argued, "when women found state programs personally beneficial, they often served as willing allies in supporting and promoting them. When they perceived state policies to be against their interests, however, they were quite capable of challenging, evading, or otherwise manipulating them."[123] Still, although perhaps just simulating the anti-Slavic pathologies of the race examiners, Wawrzyniak definitely reified them when she decried the "disgraceful fact" that "German maidens" like her sister had to endure the same oppression as Polish forced laborers and recounted her own daily exertions to avoid the latter. She was not the only one to appropriate Nazi racism in this way. "If I were a Polish girl, then I would have to suffer," Jadwiga Ciupinska stated baldly, "but I am a German."[124] The girls were not oblivious to the objectives of the WED either. Whereas Broni Steczak conveyed her desire to "remain here until I marry, but only a German boy," Zofia Jasinska seems to have consented to the erasure of her cultural identity, noting with the pride that she had "already forgotten the Polish language."[125]

In fact, a number of re-Germanizables, men as well as women, leveraged their role as parents to further their personal interests and those of their children, cleverly exploiting (and validating) the pro-natal mission and educational goals of National Socialism. When Wladyslaw Przywecki requested a transfer from Stolzenhagen to Burgweinting in order to wed his fiancée, he sweetened the appeal with a vow that they would "express our gratitude by performing our conjugal duty on the beloved German soil."[126] Making use of similar prose, Stanislawa Chrzaszcz, an expectant mother carrying the child of a German soldier, framed her pregnancy as a "service to the fatherland"; all she wanted in exchange was for her mother to be able to join her in Stendal and take care of the baby after she gave birth.[127] In a somewhat different register, Eleonora Kwasniewska claimed that she wanted her sons become "brave German soldiers" in the hope of obtaining a heated flat: "I want to raise my sons for the benefit of the German state, but I cannot do that here because we're all freezing."[128] These statements exemplify the sexual economy of re-Germanization, in which people used their bodies as bargaining chips for the chance at a brighter future. Sometimes women overtly availed of this strategy to take advantage of persecution and mass violence. On December 8, 1942, Elisabeth Hoffmann, also looking for better

[122] 5/34/86: Wawrzyniak, 4.9.42; 3/20a/287-288: Wlazinska, 12.1.41.
[123] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 3-4.
[124] 5/33/57: Ciupinska, 10.9.41.
[125] 5/34/114-115: Steczak, undated; 5/35/49: Jasinska, 6.25.42.
[126] 5/32/94: Przywecki, 6.14.41.
[127] 5/35/129-130: Chrzaszcz, 1.4.43.
[128] 5/32/56: Kwasniewska, 4.11.41.

accommodations, penned the following in a letter to the Aussenstelle: "I have two children to feed and must educate them properly… There are still so many Jewish apartments available, and one could certainly make an exception and assign me such a dwelling… I could then devote more time to my children."[129] As we saw in Chapter Three, WED candidates were not above profiting from the dispossession and murder of other human beings. Some did not even mind the perpetration of atrocities in their very midst. "This place pleases me quite well. I like it here very much," young Ligia Konrad remarked of her new abode. She lived in an SS barrack outside the concentration camp at Dachau.[130]

Even more so than other female WED candidates, the Hausgehilfinnen appear to have tried their best to conform to the gendered expectations of the race and resettlement experts by engaging in various performances of femininity. First of all, they projected the persona of motherly caregivers, often describing their fondness for the children of their Betriebsführer. Lucyna Koper, for example, said she doted on the little girls of the Lindemann family and delighted in the affectionate nickname they gave her ("Cyna").[131] Others drew particular attention to their garb. Irena Kuleczko said she was "always cleanly dressed with a red-chequered apron and a red ribbon in my hair." For re-Germanizable women especially, gender-specific articles of clothing constituted a powerful index of racial belonging. So too did housekeeping practices. Jasinska spoke of "giving the greatest effort to do everything correctly and perform my work quickly and cleanly in order to hear the words of satisfaction: 'Irena, you do keep things clean.'"[132] Dedication to the chores at hand naturally seemed like the best way for these young women to authenticate their Germanness, reciprocate the kindness of the employer, and curry favor with the host family. "If one has the right to be around an intelligent creature like Frau Braun," Pieta reasoned, "then one must work diligently as she directs and not be naughty."[133] "I go through all imaginable trouble with the tasks to be done," Wawrzyniak averred, "so that the Hoffmanns will be pleased with me."[134]

In a similar vein, these girls often expressed gratitude for the opportunity to become breadwinners and made it known that they had professional aspirations beyond domestic service.[135] Waclawa Pieta dreamed of a career in the theater; Ligia Konrad did not mention anything specific, but knew she did not want to return to her previous job as a shop-girl ("That does not suit me anymore!").[136] These ambitions may have been inspired by their Hausfrauen, many of whom were university-trained physicians. They were certainly fostered by the race experts of the RuSHA. Hofmann's maid, Josepha, matriculated at a trade school; an unnamed SS doctor in Berlin granted the same privilege to the teenage girl under his

[129] 5/35/120-121: Hoffmann, 12.8.42.
[130] 5/33/50: Konrad, 10.5.41.
[131] 2/20/38: Koper, 10.16.40.
[132] 3/20a/102: Jasinska, 6.24.41.
[133] 5/33/108-109: Pieta, 11.21.41.
[134] 5/35/36-37: Wawrzyniak, 7.14.42.
[135] 3/20a/102: Jasinska, 6.24.41.
[136] 5/33/108-109: Pieta, 11.21.41; 5/33/50: Konrad, 10.5.41.

custody.[137] Although such encouragement may seem a bit counterintuitive, it undoubtedly corresponded to the paternalism of Himmler and his underlings and their overarching aim to integrate WED candidates by crafting a framework of social mobility and "promotion." Re-Germanizable women whom the SS did not consign to agricultural labor or domestic service – a minority, to be sure – usually found work as secretaries and often served in this capacity as employees of the state, occupying positions that entailed a great deal of responsibility. Stanislawa Chrzaszcz was a clerk in the office of the Landrat in Stendal, while Elisabeth Hoffmann spent her days as an assistant in the archives of the German Labor Front (the Nazis' comprehensive trade union organization).[138] This pattern also had economic roots that stretched back to the aftermath of the First World War, when the rise of the modern commercial sector brought millions of single women into white-collar clerical positions for the first time.[139] The presence of women in the workplace, however, though sanctioned by the SS, conflicted with the conservative attitudes of many German farmers in the provinces. Maria Wawrzyniak, Marianna's older sister, initially "worked in the fields with the men" before the overseer demoted her to cooking duties. "I want to return to work in the fields," she complained, "but Herr Hiller does not allow me, and I must remain in the kitchen."[140]

Nazi officials on the ground betrayed the same kind of sexism, triggering further debates over normative gender roles. The experience of Helene Dulat is particularly illustrative in this regard. HSSPF Waldeck initially settled Helene and her family on a farm in Beinrode. When the owner voiced his displeasure at the idea of employing a woman, the local Labor Office instead sent her to an agricultural trade school for young women in Heiligenstadt to study agronomy. The local Kreisbauernführer, however, objected to her matriculation, dismissed her from the school, and forced her to return to Beinrode.[141] The push for social equality and liberation from the private sphere, in short, became an especially problematic feature of the Hausgehilfinnen initiative. Like German women, most of the housemaids did not find this profession appealing, in part because they had no prior training, but also because of the arduous routine and working-class stigma attached to it. Whereas Ciupinska divulged plainly that she was "not cut out to be a domestic servant" and did not want to be "bothered with housework," for Alice Karolek working as a servant girl was "a bitter pill to swallow."[142] She and other candidates frequently inquired whether they could relocate to a factory job in the armaments industry – a traditionally male vocation that also attracted huge numbers of women during the Second World War.[143] Some went so far as to assert that housekeeping sullied their dignity as persons of "German blood." Wiktoria Oskiera grumbled that cleaning windows was a degrading task fit for Poles, while Helena

[137] BA NS 2/81/133: Hofmann to Heissmeyer, July 11, 1942.
[138] 5/35/129-130: Chrzaszcz, 1.4.43; 5/35/120-121: Hoffmann, 12.8.42.
[139] Lower, *Hitler's Furies*, 53.
[140] 5/34/77: Wawrzyniak, 3.24.42.
[141] 5/32/34: Dulat, 2.25.41.
[142] 5/33/57: Ciupinska, 10.9.41; 5/34/2: Karolak, 1.4.42.
[143] Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung," 174.

Mackowiak thought that her overseer treated her "like a Polish woman" because she made her wash floors and do laundry.[144]

Without question, the main contributing factor behind this distaste for domestic work was the overbearing and often brutal demeanor of German employers, many of whom kept the girls on a very tight leash and exploited them mercilessly. In March 1942, for instance, Helena Makowska, for instance, described the "terrible situation" in which she toiled as follows: "The work is hard and goes beyond my powers. I must work from the beginning of the day until late at night."[145] Anna Zarzycka spoke of cleaning eleven rooms and two outbuildings every morning before washing clothes, cooking, and babysitting the five children of the Eppler family, who constantly teased her and made her perform demeaning tricks.[146] The housemaids also referred again and again to restrictions on personal freedom and communication. In Holstein, Zoltobrocka claimed that her mistress did not even permit her to leave the house or talk to anyone.[147] Other candidates griped about hosts who prevented them from attending religious services, not only because of the "close connections between Catholicism and Polishness," but because it subtracted from work time. Maria Gawinowska's overseer apparently told her quite bluntly that she was "not allowed to go to German churches."[148] This was an acutely crushing blow, for in most rural towns and villages the local church formed as the center of communal life; excluding someone from the congregation meant decisively blocking their efforts to assimilate.[149] Beyond that, the girls also alleged that the Betriebsführer confiscated or destroyed their mail – presumably to sever contact with their Polish relatives.[150] As one might guess, the letters these girls wrote to the Aussenstelle related the unmistakable impression that they effectively went through their daily lives as imprisoned serfs.

Although German men were by no means innocent, it is women who figure most prominently as authoritarian antagonists in the narratives of re-Germanizable domestic servants. The letters are filled with tales of domineering Hausfrauen screaming at their charges and disparaging them with a whole arsenal of insults, slurs, and profanity.[151] "I hear this all the time," reported Jasinska, "Usually it is curse words that I was told in Łódź could not be used against us."[152] Children and teenagers also occupied the role of petty tyrants; for Makowska, their derision represented the very worst of humiliations.[153] Kazimiera Kaczor said her mistress actually instructed the children to taunt and torment her, and they

[144] 5/33/40: Oskiera, 9.15.41; 5/33/32: Mackowiak, 9.5.41.
[145] 5/34/71: Makowska, 3.16.42.
[146] 5/33/30: Zarzycka, 9.2.41.
[147] 5/32/127-128: Zoltobrocka, 7.14.41.
[148] Ibid.; 3/20a/29: Gowinowska, 1.26.41.
[149] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 54.
[150] 5/32/128-129: Skalska, 7.16.41.
[151] 5/35/118: Konrad, 11.5.42; 5/33/46: Mackowiak, 10.5.41.
[152] 3/20a/102: Jasinska, 7.15.41.
[153] 5/34/71: Makowska, 3.16.42.

evidently obliged with relish.[154] According to many accounts, adults were equally guilty of juvenile mind games and cruel tricks. Ciupinska remembered one instance where her boss chastised her for coming home late after previously telling her she could stay out as late as she wished.[155] Some girls got so fed up with this kind of mischief that they resorted to gibes of their own – at least in the (assumed) privacy of their letters to the Aussenstelle – likening Germans to uncouth youngsters: "I would rather work with ten small children than these three adults," declared Zofia Piecyk of her overseers. "There are five children here," Zarzycka remarked, "and my Hausfrau is the sixth."[156]

How do we account for such a baffling reversal of fortune? Why did German hosts, many of whom initially welcomed these young women, treat them with such hostility? For one thing, the social-political inequalities intrinsic to domestic service strengthened the divide between employer and employee; in no other professional field did the upper and lower classes mingle with one another so closely, making the need for strict hierarchical distinctions between the two all the more necessary. For one thing, it was not uncommon to have household personnel take their meals separately from the patriarch and his family.[157] Added to this, Nazi rhetoric about femininity propagated an inherent class bias, with standards of fashion, cleanliness, self-sufficiency, and household maintenance that working-class women often could not abide by.[158] With inadequate training and limited incomes, the Hausgehilfinnen were trapped in a similar situation and likely unaccustomed to living in such a subservient position. It is notable that many of them were the daughters of relatively wealthy farmers and landowners, for whom housekeeping almost certainly signified a reduction in status. In any event, when they believed an employer had crossed the line and violated their rights, they fought back, and in so doing, they mimicked the behavior of German domestic servants. "Complaining about household personnel was a long-standing tradition," writes Ulrich Herbert, "Yet during the war, there were increased complaints about rebellious behavior, because maids were in short supply and it was no longer so obvious the domestic servant was a person the 'master and mistress' of the house could boss around, criticize, and insult with impunity, as before."[159] As Wendy Lower notes, "In the Reich's battle for births, Hitler's female combatants had to fall in line, follow orders, sacrifice for the greater good, develop nerves of steel, and suffer in silence."[160] They were not supposed to speak out against this prescribed demeanor for any reason. When "racially valuable" housemaids stood up for their independence as women of "good blood" and pressed for better living conditions, they exuded the aura of the uppity, asexual "New Woman" and

[154] 5/35/1: Kaczor, 5.1.42.
[155] 5/33/57: Ciupinska, 10.9.41.
[156] 5/35/55: Piecyk, undated; 5/33/30: Zarzycka, 9.2.41.
[157] Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung," 155, 158, 169.
[158] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 122.
[159] Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 189.
[160] Lower, *Hitler's Furies*, 23.

sabotaged the Nazi promise of a return to the "good old days." Racist attitudes could easily be grafted onto this more prosaic underlying structure of resentment.

No matter how much they attempted to "act German," these young women routinely faced derision for their presumed failure to measure up to ideals of "German" domesticity. "The work here is too difficult for me," Helena Mackowiak objected, "and my Hausfrau is never pleased with me, although I try to do everything well."[161] Genowefa Janasik's mistress castigated her even more harshly: "I must perform the most difficult work, and if I do something wrong, she scolds me until I cry."[162] Any link between conviviality and industriousness evaporated in such circumstances. Although Jasinska had boasted of her penchant for housework in June 1941, the following month she had to "admit that there are mistakes, because I'm still not all that familiar with everything"; "with good treatment" she at least "had the will and the desire to respond in a positive way."[163] By their own admission, many of the girls also lacked the maternal instinct touted by the Nazis as a key to the survival of the German *Volk*. "I have no patience for children," Michalina Borczuch stated frankly, whereas young Theresa Gawel regarded working as a nanny to be "quite undignified."[164] Nor did they prove to be very skilled in the culinary arts. "My employer wants a girl who can cook," Irena Kuleczko rued, "and he is already trying to get one." It did not help that their Hausfrauen only had German-language recipes and cookbooks for them to use (cuisine, then as now, constituted yet another tactile marker of race and ethnicity).[165]

Above all, their classification as Germans came into question not just because they spoke Polish, but due to purportedly insufficient standards of domestic hygiene. "I have no energy to work anymore," Maria Wawrzyniak explained, "because the boss calls me a Pole. I didn't clean the kitchen very well just one time, so he yelled at me and said that was always the case… The family is very cruel, probably because I have come from Poland."[166] Kazimiera Kaczor shared a similar experience: "The Frau is not happy with my work. She claims I only make things dirtier. I am not allowed to do anything in the kitchen… She is very poorly disposed toward Poles. When I tell her that I am a German, she laughs and says it isn't true." To make matters worse, these girls also often found themselves unable to maintain personal cleanliness or dress in at least halfway decent attire, the fault for which actually rested with the Betriebsführer. Kaczor alleged that her employers did not even allow her to bathe, let alone go to the city to shop for clothes.[167] Stuck in a similar predicament, Janina Skalska begged for a transfer to a factory job; at least there they would provide soap.[168] Maria Wlazinska also recognized the extent to which

[161] 5/33/46: Mackowiak, 10.5.41.
[162] 5/32/104: Janasik, 6.25.41.
[163] 3/20a/102: Jasinska, 6.24.41.
[164] 5/35/99: Borczuch, 11.11.42; 5/33/46: Mackowiak, 10.5.41.
[165] 5/33/41: Kuleczko, 9.17.41; 5/34/110: Wojcik, 4.30.42.
[166] 5/34/77: Wawrzyniak, 3.24.42.
[167] 5/35/1: Kaczor, 5.1.42.
[168] 5/32/128-129: Skalska, 7.16.41.

fashion served as a popular criterion of Germanness. While recuperating in a local hospital during the winter of 1941, a German nun "mistook" her for a "Polack" on account of her ragged coat, old purse, and "not entirely clean handkerchief."[169]

Following this perception of "inferior" feminine values, many Hausfrauen began to see in their maids all the old images of unruly, promiscuous domestic servants and stereotypes about the iniquity of Polish women that had saturated German political discourse for decades. They may have feared them as sexual rivals – a not entirely unfounded apprehension given that intimate liaisons between German men and Polish forced laborers had become commonplace.[170] The girls frequently recorded the impression that their matrons were *sehr nervös*: edgy, suspicious, volatile. Genowefa Janasik observed in June 1941 that her mistress "cannot stand to have girls around her"; two German domestics had already left her employ for this reason, though Genowefa suffered even worse mistreatment and could not escape "because I am a Pole."[171] At the very least, it is evident that many of these women mistrusted their re-Germanizable teenage guests and sought to stunt their natural sexual development; measures of strict social control fit squarely within this context. Marianna Wawrzyniak, for example, angrily recounted one incident in the summer of 1942 when her boss, Frau Hoffmann, criticized her for being "alone with a man" after dark and acting "lewd and vulgar."[172] Zofia Piecyk was similarly infuriated by the "accusations" levelled by her employer whenever she came home late, while Ksawera Zoltobrocka's boss apparently warned her "not to get to know any suitors [*Kavalieren*]."[173] It is little wonder that Regina Wucjiak felt compelled to ask, "Am I allowed to go walking with soldiers? My lady does not let me. She says the SS does not allow it. Is this true?"[174] The Nazi mandate to govern sexual reproduction, it seems, extended to dating advice as well. Quite in keeping with earlier traditions, these women linked fraternization between Germans and foreign laborers with sexual transgression and the subversion of communal mores by liminal outsiders. Young Barbara Ciepluch recalled how her landlady had rebuked her for visiting the local bake shop with a German boy in the summer of 1941, telling her she could not have German friends because she was "not a Pole anymore, but also not a German."[175] Civilians were not the only hosts to manifest this mixture of conservative values and xenophobia either. RuSHA chief Otto Hofmann excoriated Heissmeyer in the fall of 1942 when he heard that a group of SS men had flirted with Josepha. He also deterred her from going

[169] 3/20a/287-288: Wlazinska, 12.1.41.
[170] Birthe Kundrus, "Verbotener Umgang: Liebesbeziehungen zwischen Ausländer und Deutschen 1939-1945," in *Nationalsozialismus und Zwangsarbeit in der Region Oldenburg*, eds. Katharina Hoffmann and Andreas Lembeck (Oldenburg: Universität Oldenburg, 1999), 149-170.
[171] 5/33/17: Ciupinska, 8.24.41; 5/32/104: Janasik, 6.25.41.
[172] 5/35/36-37: Wawrzyniak, 7.14.42.
[173] 5/35/55: Piecyk, undated; 5/32/127-128: Zoltobrocka, 7.14.41.
[174] 5/34/104: Wucjiak, 4.23.42.
[175] 5/32/113: Ciepluch, 7.1.41.

out with another "racially valuable" housemaid who supposedly cavorted with Polish men.[176] SS officers in the provinces often reacted to reports of "misbehavior" with the same militant puritanism – even when it concerned relationships with German men. When the Gestapo in Kassel learned of one girl's intention to spend a holiday with a soldier she had befriended, they placed her under house arrest.[177]

This kind of sexual paranoia paved the way for physical violence – usually, though not always, meted out or instigated by women. On July 15, 1941, Irena Jasinska wrote to the Aussenstelle to protest the increasingly violent "temper tantrums" of her mistress: "The lady of the house often flies into a rage, kicks me, and beats me."[178] In November of that year, Irena Konrad posted a letter detailing similar forms of brutality: "[Frau Kalliebe] beats me over the head, screams at me constantly, shoves me and shakes me like a ragdoll, and if I cry then she locks me in the cellar… I ask that you have mercy on my lot, so that the lady does not dash out my brains."[179] After describing a vicious assault by Herr Hoffmann, issued at the behest of his wife as punishment for her "lewd and vulgar" behavior, Wawrzyniak also begged the race experts for protection from her erstwhile caretakers: "They torture me like cattle, though I think they have compassion even for animals … I'm here all alone without parental protection so I can be tormented and beaten without cause by strangers."[180] According to one witness, a prominent doctor in Berlin not only cut off all of her maid's hair – the standard humiliation ritual for women accused of "race defilement" (*Rassenschande*) – but beat her so badly that she "literally cries tears of blood."[181] In an inquiry regarding his sister, Siegmund Marchlewski could barely contain his outrage that "a man from the SS in Kassel is allowed to keep a seventeen-year-old girl locked in the basement and abuse her just because she requested a new location due to poor treatment." He appealed to racial solidarity in the hope of saving her: "We went through the Race and Settlement Office in Łódź… We too stem from a German family… and we were very happy to become German again… However, my sister is treated as badly as she used to be treated as a Pole."[182] A few letters suggest that some of the girls may also have been victims of sexual violence. Although allegations of rape are difficult to corroborate with the surviving source material, nonconsensual intercourse with female foreign laborers was indeed a regular occurrence, so it is certainly plausible that some men violated these young women as well.[183] Even before the war,

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[176] BA NS 2/82/171-172: Hofmann to Heissmeyer, September 25, 1942; BA NS 2/81/133: Hofmann to Heissmeyer, July 11, 1942.

[177] 5/35/154: Marchlewski, 5.16.43.

[178] 3/20a/102: Jasinska, 6.24.41.

[179] 5/33/110: Konrad, 11.23.41.

[180] 5/35/36-37: Wawrzyniak, 7.14.42.

[181] 5/34/106: Kondek, 4.25.42.

[182] 5/35/154: Marchlewski, 5.16.43.

[183] Based on excerpts from several letters, Ryszard Poradowski has asserted that some of the girls were raped, though Isabel Heinemann has questioned the veracity of these claims; see Ryszard Poradowski, "Obóz 'Rasowy' przy ulicy Spornej w Łódźi w swietle relacji Wiezniów," in *Biuletyn Okregowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Łódźi* (Łódź: Instytutu Pamieci Narodowej, 1989), 41-56; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 289. Also see Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 233-234.

moreover, farmers customarily expected German domestics allocated by one of the Nazis' public service initiatives to have sex with them.[184]

Of course, not all female WED candidates had to endure such dreadful ordeals, nor were their custodians always monsters. As we have seen in numerous instances, "racially valuable" housemaids often spoke fondly of their employers and neighbors as well as the time they spent with them. By extension, the managers of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* did have valid evidence with which to justify the continuation of the project. In one summary report, Ehlich exemplified other "success stories" by singling out young Alexandra Landowska for special mention, raving that she had "mastered the German language," acquitted herself "extremely well," and proved to be "intellectually above-average." According to the observations of her mistress as well as the local Gestapo, "Lewandowska is indistinguishable from other German girls and has been recognized as a superlatively valuable addition to the German population."[185] Regardless of what their supervisors might have thought or said, however, it is more than apparent that most of these girls were utterly miserable. Away from home and loved ones, afflicted by physical and emotional exhaustion, and living at the mercy of their German overlords, many Hausgehilfinnen chronicled a descent into the depths of depression and madness. Pieta composed eloquent prose to encapsulate the anguish of her experience: "I had beautiful plans for the future… But the war of unnecessary bloodshed brought me misery, as if awakening one day from an innocent, beautiful, blissful dream to life as a lonely human soul tormented by travail." "What are we?" she asked rhetorically, "Are we not living beings of flesh and bone?[186] Reflecting on her time in Germany, Anastazja Majer captured these feelings of despondency more tersely: "You would no longer recognize the lively and smiling girl from before."[187] Wanda Brzoskowska's brevity was equally poignant: "Such a life is no life [*Solches Leben das ist kein Leben*]."[188] Their letters more than insinuate that many girls teetered on the verge of a mental breakdown. "I am suffering from a nervous condition," Helena Makowska confided, "and I fear that I'm going insane."[189] Eugenia Wojcik similarly disclosed that she had developed "a nervous disorder" because "I cringe in fear every time I hear my name."[190] Jadwiga Ciupinska and Wanda Chojnacka chose identical phrasing to denote what a "purely German environment" had done to them: "One could easily go crazy here."[191] Time and again, these young women turned to the SS, begging for leave to visit their families or switch to another job with more

[184] Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front*, 108.
[185] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/11-21: Ehlich, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Eindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Fremdstämmigen," December 19, 1942.
[186] 5/33/108-109: Pieta, 11.21.41.
[187] 5/32/122: Majer, 7.8.41.
[188] 5/33/47: Brzoskowska, undated.
[189] 5/34/71: Makowska, 3.16.42.
[190] 5/35/7: Wojcik, 5.16.42.
[191] 5/33/57: Ciupinska, 10.9.41; 5/32/102: Chojnacka, 6.22.41.

hospitable proprietors. When their supplications went unanswered, the housemaids began to contemplate dire alternatives. In letter after letter, they threatened to commit suicide – a gambit neither idle nor histrionic. "With tears in my eyes, I beseech you to change my location," Bronislawa Nikuczynska wrote to Schwalm, "I do not want to work as a house-girl and I cannot go on living like this. If you reject my request, then I will take my own life."[192] Brought to Germany as a "desirable population increase," these young women had been reduced to bartering with their very lives, proffering their importance as "racially valuable future mothers" in order to escape a wretched existence.

The letters of Irena Kuleczko evoke the persona not of a docile homemaker, but of a headstrong, desperate girl driven by circumstances to the point of recalcitrance. In March 1942, without notifying the police, Irena left the home of her overseer in Kassel and went to stay with an uncle in Salzburg. She subsequently surprised local authorities with brazen demands for approval to remain in the city. After the Gestapo warned her to desist, she penned the following in a letter to the Aussenstelle: "I would rather die than return to Kassel. No more beatings, screaming, threats, or hard labor … When the police come after me with guns and threaten me with death, I will not go. Nobody will snatch me by force."[193] Irena stood in for other re-Germanizable women who did not understand why their official racial designation did not guarantee popular recognition or equitable treatment. Irena Konrad thought she had completed the re-Germanization process and did not conceal her disappointment when Herr Kalliebe disagreed and continued to refer to her as "Polonia."[194] Shocked by a friend's tale of severe beatings, Maria Kondek reminded the race experts that "She too is capable of Germanization and should be treated as a German."[195] Nina Gawinska deployed a similar type of rhetoric: "We should be treated as Germans… Why are we persecuted in this way?"[196] It was one brief question posed by Maria Wawrzyniak, however, that most effectively summed up the interstitial limbo in which these women lived: "What will become of me as a German national who cannot truly be German?"[197]

The experiences of re-Germanizable Polish housemaids and other female WED candidates indicate that contemporary notions of gender and sexuality supplied firm perceptual coordinates for the quantification of race under the wartime Third Reich, one of several axes around which practices of inclusion and exclusion revolved and converged. For ordinary people and Nazi officials alike, popular tropes of femininity operated as a medium for interpreting and organizing the complexity of everyday behaviors into stable distinctions between German and non-German, an instrument with which to flesh out real-life applications of identity politics from an otherwise abstract blend of social mores, cultural

[192] 5/32/85: Nikuczynska, 6.1.41.
[193] 5/34/68-70: Kuleczko, 3.3.42.
[194] 5/33/50: Konrad, 10.5.41.
[195] 5/34/106: Kondek, 4.25.42.
[196] 5/35/54: Gawinska, 6.29.42.
[197] 5/34/77: Wawrzyniak, 3.24.42.

fantasies, ethnic prejudices, and class biases. The invocation of these factors by both state and non-state actors in turn points to a multidimensional grid of collective agency that mapped out the arc of Nazi policy-making to a far greater extent than conventional analytical rubrics have heretofore acknowledged. Although undoubtedly victims of oppression, the Hausgehilfinnen also legitimized and reinforced the goals of the SS through their daily actions, not only by performing traditional women's roles, but by exploiting their function as mothers in a manner that helped to racialize the public domain from within the private sphere. Their Hausfrauen, on the other hand, drew on familiar stereotypes of domesticity the Nazis themselves advertised in order to challenge state-sanctioned definitions of belonging. If the housemaids did not accord with the idealized image of German women, neither did the German women who were supposed to be their role models. The abusive conduct of the latter and the supposed shortcomings of the former massively disrupted Naz racial dichotomies and raised a profoundly unsettling proposition: if these maidens, ostensibly the "purest of the pure," could not actually be integrated, then what did that bode for the future of the Re-Germanization Procedure and the search for "lost German blood" as a whole? During the early stages of the war, of course, this question went unanswered; rather than stimulating a reappraisal of Germanization policy, the problems that impaired the WED on the home front remained largely unaddressed – even as the Nazis began introducing the same model in occupied territories all over the continent of Europe, as we will see over the course of the next two chapters.

Chapter Five: The Floating Sector

"We would not be true National Socialists if we did not have the unshakable conviction that we can succeed in molding people with German blood into enthusiastic Germans through our leadership and tutelage."

–Albert Forster

"You may dip a herring in wine, but by no means will a better fish come out."

–Arthur Greiser

In April 1941, Fritz Bracht, the Gauleiter of Upper Silesia, received a letter from a most exalted constituent in Bestwina. Maria-Klothilde von Thuillières, Countess of Montjoye-Vaufrey (known informally as Maja) was the widow of Archduke Leo Karl and a member of the Habsburg dynasty that had ruled Austria and much of southeastern Europe for centuries before the cataclysm of the First World War. Several months prior, Reichsführer-SS Himmler had personally denied her request for recognition as a German national; she wanted the Gauleiter to intervene and reverse the decision. Acting on Bracht's advice, Maja filed an application with the Deutsche Volksliste – the Nazis' comprehensive system of ethno-racial classification in the incorporated Polish territories – and after consulting genealogical records and a number of intimate witnesses, the mayor of Bestwina confirmed that she was indeed "German by descent and attitude." Local NSDAP and SS functionaries, however, objected to this ruling; to them, Maja was "politically unreliable," "foreign to the National Socialist state, if not outright hostile," one of the "magnates for whom nationality is but a means to an end." Her husband had served with distinction in the Polish Army during the interwar period, they pointed out, and the Gestapo had just recently arrested her brother-in-law, Archduke Karl Albrecht – a staunch monarchist and anti-Nazi – for refusing to sign the Volksliste. At least one civil servant in Katowice was nonetheless outraged: "In my opinion, the facts suffice to sweep away any remaining doubt, as if the name of 'Habsburg' were not enough." Maja now tried to go above Bracht and Himmler; on May 21, 1941, she wrote to Adolf Hitler himself.[1]

The story of Maria Habsburg-Montjoye showcases the intrusive investigations, internal battles, and conflicting points of view that went into the definition of Germanness in the western Polish borderlands, not to mention the strange circumstances that brought Nazi elites, bureaucrats, and civilians into contact with one another. Maja was only one among millions of people caught up in the Nazis' campaign to sort out the nationally indifferent population stratum they referred to as the *Zwischenschicht* – a term we have encountered before, which translates directly as "intermediary stratum," yet also bore

[1] BA R 49/37/31: Habsburg-Montjoye to Bracht, undated; BA R 49/37/24: Bracht to Habsburg-Montjoye, April 10, 1941; BA R 49/37/50: Wirsich to Arlt, April 19, 1941; BA R 49/37/40-48: Arlt to Wirsich, April 19, 1941; BA R 49/37/108: "Aktenvermerk betr. Volkszugehörigkeit," unsigned, October 28, 1941; BA R 49/37/34-35: Habsburg-Montjoye to Hitler, May 21, 1941.

another connotation: the "floating sector."[2] At the same time, her encounter with the Nazi state speaks to the manner in which images and narratives of the past informed the construction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in the present. Maja represented the social and philosophical order the Nazis wanted to overthrow, a cosmopolitan, aristocratic world they sought to replace with a racially pure and ethnically homogeneous empire. The "name of Habsburg" was precisely the problem. Curiously, it was neither race nor ancestry that disqualified Maja from acceptance into the German nation, but ethnic and socio-political factors – a situation that stands at odds with typical depictions of the Third Reich as a "racial state." If Maja belonged to the German *Volk* by virtue of descent, then why did some Nazis choose to rebuff her? By extension, why were others willing to overlook her mixed cultural heritage and support her claim on the basis of blood ties alone? What were the administrative structures and political circumstances that precipitated these kinds of debates? To answer such questions, we must shift our focus back to western Poland – first to the momentous events that transformed the occupation regime there in the months leading up to the invasion of the Soviet Union, and then to the implementation of the DVL in each of the three incorporated eastern territories: Wartheland, Danzig-West Prussia, and (East) Upper Silesia.

In the early spring of 1941, the SS suffered a fatal setback to its mission to "cleanse" these provinces of Poles. The deportations had never been popular among many leading Nazis. Hans Frank, in whose domain tens of thousands of people had been unceremoniously dumped, pleaded with Hitler to end them on numerous occasions, lest the General Government be overrun with "undesirables" whom he had neither the resources nor the inclination to care for.[3] It was also abundantly clear to the Reich Labor Ministry and Göring's Office of the Four-Year Plan that the growing demand for manpower in Germany would never be met if the RuSHA Eignungsprüfer continued to hamstring the importation of foreign workers with their exacting standards. One consultant at the Racial Policy Office predicted in April 1940 that UWZ personnel could not possibly screen the massive number of laborers required.[4] He was right: between May 1940 and January 1941, they supplied only the meager sum of 11,912 people.[5] That month, the Labor Office in Jarocin complained that SS resettlement operatives paid scant attention to economic concerns and freely cast away skilled workers in droves.[6] Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union made this situation untenable and sounded the death knell of SS control over foreign labor recruitment.

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[2] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 744.

[3] Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 54, 60.

[4] Gerhard Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien und ökonomische Zwänge. Die rassischen Selektionen polnischer Arbeitskräfte durch die SS in den Lagern der Umwandererzentralstelle," in *Nationalsozialistische Lager. Neue Beiträge zur NS-Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik und zur Gedenkstättenpädogogik*, eds. Akim Jah, Christoph Kopke, and Alexander Korb (Münster: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2006), 141.

[5] USHMMA 15.015M/3/227/1-2: "Aufstellung und Verteilung der im 2. Nahplan ausgesiedelten Polen in der Zeit vom 6. Mai 1940 bis 20. Januar 1941 aus dem Warthegau," undated.

[6] USHMMA 15.015M/2/146/22: Kendzia to Damzog, January 16, 1941.

Once again, it was Göring who set things in motion. In late January 1941, the Reichsmarschall informed Himmler and Interior Minister Frick that "foreign laborers must be imported to the widest possible extent… demographic and racial-political objections must [therefore] be placed in the background."[7] On February 12, he called for the delivery of a 250,000 agricultural workers from Poland, primarily from the Warthegau, which would have to become the "granary" of the Reich for the near future. Gauleiter Greiser soon recognized that he could no longer afford to expel people en masse if he hoped to fulfill these tasks.[8] The decisive pressure for an end to the deportations, however, came from the army (solicited by Frank), whose high command worried that the mayhem they produced would cause all kinds of security problems behind the lines, not to mention impose serious constraints on the transportation system. For "obvious military reasons," the Wehrmacht could not allow rolling stock to be diverted from the front, even for the purpose of ethnic cleansing.[9] Over the course of February and March 1941, SS agents in the Warthegau gradually pieced together the degree to which the political landscape had shifted beneath their feet.[10] On March 11, Greifelt issued a ban on all deportations to the General Government; the trains stopped rolling eastwards from Łódź a week later.[11] On March 31, Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller notified Höppner that "the deployment of non-Germanizable Polish families in the Old Reich obviously must take place through the Labor Office and not through the UWZ."[12] On May 30, Schwalm received word from Höppner that the employment of Poles in Germany no longer required a racial examination; the labor offices would henceforth proceed without the approval of the RuSHA (they had already been doing so for several months). This shift in policy was "deplorable for every racial and ethnic reason," Höppner lamented, yet ultimately necessary "due to the exigencies of war" and the "current emergency situation of the Reich in regard to the shortage of labor forces."[13]

Many historians have argued that the deportation stop and the switch to all out foreign labor conscription in March 1941 fundamentally reoriented Nazi policy-making away from racial-ideological goals and toward a more pragmatic approach to governance designed to increase wartime economic productivity and ensure political stability. In the words of Gerhard Wolf, "it soon dawned even on National Socialist hardliners that the imperatives of a country at war dominated every other policy field. Controlling the annexed territories with a very limited number of personnel while trying to mobilize them

[7] Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien," 142.

[8] Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1940-1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 203, 213

[9] Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution*, 99-101.

[10] USHMMA 15.015/2/146/23-24: Krumey to Ehlich, February 25, 1941; USHMMA 15.015/4/259/39-40: Höppner to Müller and Ehlich, March 13, 1941; USHMMA 15.015M/2/146/42-43: Höppner to Müller, March 27, 1941.

[11] Wolf, "Rassistische Utopien," 143; Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution*, 99-101.

[12] USHMMA 15.015/2/146/50: Müller to Höppner, March 31, 1941.

[13] USHMMA 15.015/2/146/59-60: Höppner to Schwalm, May 30, 1941.

for the German war effort imposed limits on how the native population could be treated."[14] According Karsten Linne, Himmler's goals "came into ever greater conflict with the rising demands of the German war economy for labor forces. Due to the course of the war, the conflict was decided in favor of labor recruitment; ethnic questions were put off until after the war."[15] Philip Rutherford goes further, suggesting that Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* "grew more rational and less racially motivated as the regime came to realize the military and economic value of its Polish subjects. In effect, it apparently 'de-radicalized' as time passed."[16] The changing state of affairs in March 1941 clearly did represent a grave defeat for the SS: it not only lost the prerogative to vet incoming foreign laborers, but the ability to remove Poles from the incorporated eastern territories, and the same dictates would continue to impede his resettlement schemes from here on out. But the end of expulsions to the east did not mean an end to the project of racial consolidation – far from it.

To be sure, when the deportations ceased, so did the admission of new candidates into the Re-Germanization Procedure, at least for a time. Greifelt observed in August 1941 that "the investigation of families to determine their suitability for Germanization decreased sharply after the evacuations were halted."[17] But the eviction of Poles from their homes could not stop, because there were still tens of thousands of ethnic German Umsiedler awaiting settlement in makeshift holding camps all over the Warthegau. On March 19, the leaders of the UWZ and the RKF met to discuss their next move. The mood of the attendees was one of disconsolate frustration, as reported by Höppner, who noted that "future measures" were "entirely unclear" given the existing "transport difficulties." They resolved to press forward nonetheless. All the participants agreed that the UWZ should continue to evict Poles from areas earmarked for colonization, yet now they would house them in huge detention camps, or "Pole reservations," where they could be monitored, put to work, and held for eventual "evacuation" to the East. In the following weeks, another proposal emerged to cram evictees into the homes of relatives in distant counties, away from the settlement zones.[18] With yet another of the Nazis' favorite water-related technical terms, this policy of internal resettlement came to be known as "displacement" (*Verdrängung*).[19] Beginning in the spring of 1941, UWZ commandos spread renewed terror throughout the Polish countryside, descending on farms and villages, ejecting inhabitants from their homes with extreme

[14] Gerhard Wolf, "Suitable Germans: Enforced Assimilation Policies in Danzig-West Prussia, 1939-1945," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism*, eds. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 214.

[15] Karsten Linne, "Die deutsche Arbeitsverwaltung zwischen 'Volkstumspolitik' und Arbeiterrekrutierung – das Beispiel Warthegau" in *Pflicht, Zwang und Gewalt: Arbeitsverwaltungen und Arbeitskräftepolitik im deutsch besetzten Polen und Serbien 1939-1944*, eds. Florien Dierl, Zoran Janjetović, and Karsten Linne (Essen: Klartext, 2013), 169.

[16] Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution*, 216-217.

[17] LOC/NMT, 784-787, Doc. NO-2481: Greifelt to Himmler (English transcript), August 2, 1941.

[18] USHMMA 15.015M/2/146/37-38: Höppner to Krumey, March 21, 1941; USHMMA 15.015M/2/146/40: Krumey to Damzog, March 21, 1941. Also see Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews* (London: Arnold, 1999), 153-156.

[19] USHMMA 15.015M/2/112/1-2: Krumey to Damzog, Hübner, and Höppner, May 12, 1941.

brutality, and rounding them up for internment – though not before the Eignungsprüfer detailed to the SS settlement staffs had a chance to conduct a racial evaluation. A whole new pool of prospective candidates now opened up before their eyes. Individuals rated with grades RuS-I or II were transferred to the Aussenstelle as potential re-Germanizables; the rest were either handed over to the labor offices and shipped to Germany or placed in one of three massive "reservations" in Kalisz, Wieluń, and Ostrowo. In 1942 alone, UWZ functionaries quartered 167,417 people in these camps.[20] Operating in this fashion, they procured enough housing to settle some sixty thousand ethnic Germans in the winter of 1941-1942 alone.[21] Between February 1941 and January 1942, they also brought an additional 7,327 Polish civilians into the Re-Germanization Procedure.[22]

These moderate successes came at an incredibly high price, as a number of German officials were quick to point out. "Displacement" unleashed just as much havoc as the earlier deportations had. Even beyond the fact that police detachments sometimes removed residents from their jobs without warning, they often simply turned people out into the street and told them to move in with family members in other districts.[23] The latter tactic soon created a minor refugee crisis, as evicted Poles wandered aimlessly by the thousands throughout the region, contributing to the growth of the underground resistance movement and prompting all sorts of security anxieties over the heightened incidence of banditry, smuggling, and general lawlessness.[24] Greiser, however, maintained his steadfast support. In the late summer of 1941, he told Party notables that he had "demanded from the sub-districts an even harsher concentration of displaced persons, even if there was a danger of the outbreak of disease or death for the Poles."[25] Himmler's men carried on in spite of loud objections from voices inside Greiser's administration. In the spring and summer of 1942, they introduced the so-called *Z-Hof-Aktion*, a program that freed up around 130,000 small farms by forcing 155,230 of their Polish occupants to leave and relegating them to a kind of indentured servitude in agricultural communes – unless they were "capable for re-Germanization."[26] Between March 1941 and January 1944, in five separate waves consisting of more than three thousand

[20] BA R 75/9/1-17: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Rahmen des erweiterten 3. Nahplanes," December 31, 1942.

[21] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 138-139.

[22] Aly, *Final Solution*, 88, 156-157.

[23] USHMMA 15.015M/4/270/4: DAF Kosten to Gauleitung Wartheland, July 15, 1941.

[24] USHMMA 15.015M/2/126/4: Gendarmerie Belchatal, "Sicherheit im Kreis Belchatal," March 18, 1941; USHMMA 15.015M/2/126/3-3v: Gendarmerie Sieradsch, "Evakuierung in den Kreisen Brzezno and Zloczew," March 22, 1941.

[25] Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 176-177.

[26] BA R 75/9/1-17: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Rahmen des erweiterten 3. Nahplanes," December 31, 1942. Also see Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1998), 147-149.

individual operations, the UWZ uprooted 249,223 people, bringing the total number of victims, including the (authorized) deportations that transpired before March 1941, to 535,384 people.[27]

And that was just in the Wartheland. In late 1940 and early 1941, the SS transplanted its template of ethnic cleansing and racial selection to the other annexed Polish provinces too. Beginning in August 1940, the regional RKF specialist in Upper Silesia, Dr. Fritz Arlt, oversaw the deportation of around twenty thousand people who also passed through the camps in Łódź and underwent a racial examination. The "evacuations" intensified when Ehlich appointed Horst Barth to head the newly erected UWZ outpost in Katowice. After March 1941, Barth and Arlt managed the transition to a policy of "displacement"; as of early 1943, their men had evicted, dispossessed, and screened approximately sixty thousand inhabitants of towns and villages across the eastern half of Upper Silesia, packing most of them into tiny, overcrowded urban tenements.[28] The pattern was highly similar in Danzig-West Prussia, where Gauleiter Albert Forster had enlisted the services of the SS at least as early as March 1940 to expel just over forty thousand people from his realm.[29] This deportation program also became interwoven with the mandate for ethnic German resettlement and re-Germanization. Due to the need to make room for incoming Bessarabian Germans, the UWZ erected three camps in Toruń, Potulice, and Tczew in early 1941.[30] Schwalm and Künzel had already traveled to Danzig (Gdańsk) the previous autumn to discuss the "selection of ethnic aliens" with local administrators.[31] By February 10, 1941, the SS had sent 140 people to the UWZ complex in Łódź; eighty-one of them wound up in the General Government, whereas the remaining fifty-nine went to the Reich as WED candidates.[32] On April 28, the Aussenstelle confirmed receipt of another forty-nine individuals who had been provisionally declared "capable of re-Germanization." Fourteen more arrived two days later, and the trains continued to roll in.[33]

In the course of 1941, the WED experienced a period of sustained growth. There were only 2,399 Poles from the Warthegau enrolled in the program in February; a year later that number had swelled to over ten thousand. Put another way, the SS took in more than four times as many people during the eleven months that followed the March 1941 deportation stop than they had in the previous eleven months

[27] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – International Tracing Service Digital Archives (=ITS) 1.2.7.9.1/82189531: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Reichsgau Wartheland für das Jahr 1943," Anlage 1, December 31, 1943.

[28] ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82182980-981: Bilfinger to Gestapo Kattowitz, February 14, 1941; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/98: Lorenz to Schwalm, April 4, 1941. Also see Valentina Maria Stefanski, "Nationalsozialistische Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik im Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz 1939-1945," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 31 (2005): 38-67; Sybille Steinbacher, *Musterstadt Auschwitz. Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (Munich: Saur, 2000), 132-135.

[29] BA R 70/93/52-53: Forster to Hildebrandt, March 21, 1940; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN199/36-40: Löbsack, "Richtlinien zur Nachprüfung von Beschwerden über zu Unrecht erfolgte Evakuierungen und über nicht erfolgte Anerkennung als Volksdeutscher," May 31, 1940.

[30] ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82182978-979: Heydrich to Gestapo Danzig, January 23, 1941; ITS 1.2.7.10.1.I305/82190457-460: Willich to Hildebrandt and Löbsack, February 3, 1941.

[31] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447415: Hofmann to Künzel, September 23, 1940.

[32] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/82-85: "Liste von evakuierte Polen aus dem Gau Danzig-Westpreussen," undated.

[33] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/112: Dongus to Püschel, April 28, 1941; USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/116: Krumey to Lorenz, May 8, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/6/45/8: Schultz to Dongus, January 12, 1942.

combined. "Displacement" and full-scale labor recruitment turned out to be quite effective tools for harvesting "racially valuable Poles," yet these subjects still only amounted to a miniscule fraction of the total number of Polish forced laborers in Germany. They also made up less than 3 percent of the 491,417 "ethnic aliens" the SS had deported from or displaced within the Warthegau between December 1939 and January 1943.[34] The quest to unite all "persons of German blood" continued to exercise a dramatic hold over the Nazi imagination as well as guide the direction of policy-making – and not just within the SS. Indeed, with the coming of the Deutsche Volksliste, this crusade would increasingly fall under the auspices of powerful rivals and grow beyond Himmler's ability to control.

That was in large part due to the fact that he never really enjoyed absolute jurisdiction over it to begin with. The simultaneous launch of the UWZ and the Re-Germanization Procedure in the spring of 1940 had not resolved the all-important question of who deserved German citizenship in the incorporated eastern territories; if anything, the situation had become even more convoluted. For all the efforts of the SS and the Interior Ministry to systematize the naturalization process, the Gauleiter in each of these provinces refused to kowtow to Berlin and persisted in employing different procedures. Civil servants stationed there had little choice but to toe the line. On May 20, one of Greifelt's deputies at the RKF wrote a scathing criticism of this predicament, pointing out that regional authorities in Poland only partially followed the guidelines laid down by the Interior Ministry back in November 1939. Even worse, neither these statutes nor the actual registration process accorded with Himmler's view that "the positive determination of racial belonging" should be "the primary characteristic of Germanness."[35] Eager to put a leash on the Gauleiter, Frick and Stuckart reluctantly elected to cooperate with the SS, though they did not want cave to Himmler outright. A stalemate resulted, lasting throughout the late summer of 1940, until Hitler met with Heydrich in early September and sided of the Reichsführer-SS. Formal resistance on the part of the Interior Ministry soon evaporated.[36] On September 12, 1940, with Stuckart's grudging consent, Himmler released his Decree for the Examination and Sorting of the Population in the Incorporated Eastern Territories, in which he appropriated Greiser's framework as the basis for a unified Volksliste with legally binding effect in each of the annexed Polish provinces. In other words, the decision to use the Warthegau model as a vehicle for extending the "hunt for good blood" to the population at large surfaced a full seven months before the deportation stop of March 1940, and although Himmler was undoubtedly aware at that time of Hitler's plan to attack the Soviet Union, there is no evidence to suggest he could have predicted this would entail a halt to expulsions.

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[34] USHMMA 15.015M/3/227/1-2: "Kreisweise Aufstellung der aus dem Warthegau ausgesiedelten Polen," January 20, 1941; BA NS 19/1780/30: "Monatliche Zugänge an wiedereindeutschungsfähigen Personen aus den ehem. Polnischen Gebieten," undated; BA R 75/9/1-17: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Rahmen des erweiterten 3. Nahplanes," December 31, 1942.

[35] BA R 49/61/47: "Bericht von Dr. Walter," unsigned, May 20, 1940.

[36] Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1961), 124-126.

The Reichsführer-SS changed little about Greiser's distinction between "active" and "passive" involvement in the "ethnic struggle." Groups A and B – for "avowed Germans" and "ancestral Germans" – would now become Group 1 and Group 2 of the new, enlarged DVL. Yet beyond the circle of self-identifying Volksdeutsche, he also outlined further categories to embrace "persons of German descent, or Deutschstämmige, who in the course of the years have engaged in associations with *Polentum*, yet whose behavior indicates that they can become authentic members of the German ethnic community." Such individuals would be eligible for inclusion in Group 3 and Group 4 of the DVL. In establishing the former, Himmler envisioned the integration of some one million people from the *Zwischenschicht* – defined here as the assemblage of ethnic "splinter groups" with an "unclear orientation" that dotted the Polish landscape and presumably contained sizable shares of "Nordic blood": the Kashubes of Pomerelia, the Masurians of East Prussia, as well as the Slonzaks and so-called Water Poles (*Wasserpolen*) of Upper Silesia. Those "persons of German descent," or Deutschstämmige, who had "politically supported the Poles," on the other hand, fell into Group 4 as "renegades." Given the ambiguous cultural and national affiliations of these various population categories, admission into Group 3 or Group 4, Himmler ordained, could only take place after a thorough racial assessment – the precursor to their eventual insertion into the WED: "Members of groups 3 and 4 must be raised into full-fledged Germans, or re-Germanized, through intensive educational work over a period of time in the Old Reich." To validate these measures, Himmler once again cited the legacies of the past: "The history of the East proves that a general attempt to Germanize the eastern provinces without consideration of racial viewpoints leads to failure in the long run and to the loss of the German eastern provinces."[37]

The issuance of the September 12 decree marked a triumph not just for the SS, but for the doctrines of racial anthropology over the more limited ambitions of ethnic particularism. But the victory was incomplete, for the jurists of the Interior Ministry had only been bowed, not broken. Citizenship matters had always rested under the purview of the ministerial bureaucracy, and even Himmler did not have the clout to change that.[38] Now it was Frick's turn to benefit from personal access to Hitler, and he exploited it to erect a solid counterweight to the SS, announcing on February 9, 1941 that "The Führer has conclusively resolved that the representatives of the state administration should preside over applications for acknowledgement as a German ethnic member."[39] Wilhelm Stuckart – by this point the real power behind the Interior Ministry – subsequently set out to codify Himmler's fantasies into a precise legal structure, and though he undoubtedly shared many of the same ideas, he also sought to soften their more radical edges. While Stuckart formalized the practice of racial examinations within the DVL, he only

[37] BA R 3601/2354/37-39: Himmler, "Erlass für die Überprüfung und Aussonderung der Bevölkerung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," September 12, 1940.
[38] Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1945* (Berlin: Akademie, 1987), 459.
[39] BA R 43-II/136/54-56: Frick to Hess, February 9, 1941.

permitted them in cases involving applicants who could not verify German descent. That he feared handing the business of naturalization over to the Eignungsprüfer can be deduced from the fact that they did obtain a spot on the DVL commissions, each of which consisted of the Landrat or mayor, several Party leaders and ethnicity specialists, an SD delegate, and a representative from the local ethnic German community, all of whom could exercise a veto over the proceedings. Nevertheless, when the Regulation on the Deutsche Volksliste and German Nationality in the Incorporated Eastern Territories appeared in March 1941, it adopted the text of Himmler's earlier decree almost verbatim: "It is essential that no German blood goes missing or becomes useful to a foreign ethnicity… In the eastern territories, no German may be denied entry into the German ethnic community."

Whereas families in groups 1 and 2 automatically received full civil rights as German nationals, those in groups 3 and 4 entered into "conditional state subjecthood [*Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf*]," a form of limited, probationary citizenship that could be revoked within a timeframe of ten years "if the pursuit of Germanization fails." For the remaining population, the Interior Ministry came up with the spurious juridical concept "protected members of the German Reich [*Schutzangehörige des deutschen Reiches*]." An exceedingly cynical misnomer, this category designated a vast rightless underclass of Poles.[40] Strict regulations on marriage accompanied this typology. As one might expect, unions between ethnic Germans and "protected members" were forbidden as a matter of course, though Group 4 "renegades" also could not wed people from other classes or Reich Germans, and registrants in Group 3 could only do so if they acquired permission from the RuSHA.[41] The Nazis thus erected a graduated legal system replete with parallels to segregationist statutes found throughout Europe's overseas colonial realm.[42] Yet what is perhaps more interesting here is that, unlike German administrators in Africa during the early twentieth century, they did not adhere to a repetition of the "one-drop rule" as practiced in the United States under Jim Crow. Actually, they inverted this principle; instead of defining foreigners as any person with a single non-German ancestor, no matter how remote, Stuckart insisted that "not a single drop of German blood may benefit a foreign ethnicity."[43]

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[40] USHMMA 15.169M/3/NTN198/1-4: Frick, "Verordnung über die Deutsche Volksliste und die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," March 4, 1941; USHMMA 15.007/9/113/1-11: Frick, "Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit durch ehemalige polnische und Danziger Staatsangehörige," March 13, 1941. At first, members of Group 3 received normal "state subjecthood," with naturalization to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Only in subsequent addenda did this status become "conditional."

[41] USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/49-50: Klinger, "Aktenvermerk betr. Mischehen," April 7, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/47/2: Mehlhorn to Regierungspräsidenten in Posen, Hohensalza, and Litzmannstadt, July 8, 1942.

[42] David Furber, "Near as Far in the Colonies: The Nazi Occupation of Poland," *International Historical Review* 26, no. 3 (September 2004): 551-555; Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 420.

[43] USHMMA 15.169M/3/NTN198/1-4: Frick, "Verordnung über die Deutsche Volksliste und die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," March 4, 1941. Also see Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and Settler Identities in Namibia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), 42.

In essence, the DVL decrees of 1940 and 1941 provided for a mandate to overhaul existing naturalization procedures and ensure technical and legal uniformity in the incorporated eastern territories, not an SS takeover over the system itself. But they definitely represented a huge step forward for Himmler and his dream of racial reclamation. The Deutsche Volksliste became "an expanded re-Germanization program" designed to absorb over one million people into the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.[44] What was more, the SS could now count on the bureaucracy and the Nazi Party to join in the "hunt for good blood" and bring all the resources and expertise of a modern state and political movement to bear. Yet if the Reichsführer-SS thought he had successfully harnessed and sidelined these institutions, he was in for a rude awakening. In the words of Diemut Majer, "the Germanization of 'non-Germans' was *institutionalized* by the Deutsche Volksliste, but by no means *consistently implemented*."[45] As Himmler would soon learn, the Gauleiter could not be coopted or pushed around so easily. The inauguration of a standardized ethnic registry did little to defuse preexisting disputes over who had "German blood"; on the contrary, it set the stage for even more bitter internecine conflicts.

This quickly became apparent in the Wartheland. During the long interim between October 1939 and March 1941, Gauleiter Arthur Greiser had skillfully navigated the evolving political situation so as to maintain his own sovereignty, always making sure to tailor his stance to changing circumstances when necessary, though never relinquishing authority over the character of policy within his "model Gau." Full of pride upon reading Himmler's September 12 decree, he immediately agreed to follow its provisions to the letter, advised here and elsewhere by way of his close working relationship with the circle of SD agents stationed in Poznań (Höppner above all).[46] Yet while he allowed the SS to turn the Warthegau into a testing ground for schemes of demographic engineering, Greiser resisted attempts by the race examiners to interfere with "his" DVL.[47] As he bluntly told Greifelt in November 1940, "It is my responsibility alone to decide who I charge with policy-making in my Gau. I do not have the slightest intention of leaving the Volksliste procedure to the agencies of the police and the SS… All future collaboration will only occur in the form that I consider desirable."[48] Greiser was also overtly hostile toward the Interior Ministry. Fed up with waiting for a general ordinance on the DVL, he announced in late January 1941

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[44] Gerhard Wolf, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität. Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012), 478-479.

[45] Diemut Majer, *Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), 241-242.

[46] Gerhard Wolf, "Auf dem Weg in eine 'völkische' und 'rassisch' stratifizierte Gesellschaft. Die Deutsche Volksliste im Wartheland," in *Ungleichheitem im 'Dritten Reich.' Semantiken, Praktiken, Erfahrungen*, eds. Nicole Kramer and Armin Nolzen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012) 37-39.

[47] For background information, see the documents in Karol Marian Pospieszalski, ed., *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. IV*: *Niemiecka lista narodowa w "Krajy Warty"* (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1952). Also see Werner Rohr, "'Reichsgau Wartheland' 1939-1945. Vom Exerzierplatz des praktischen Nationalsozialismus zum Mustergau?" *Bulletin für Faschismus- und Weltkriegsforschung* 18 (2002): 28-54.

[48] Quoted from Wolf, *Ideologie*, 312.

that he would instead release his own. Stuckart only persuaded him not to do so by threatening that unilateral action would incur the wrath of Hitler, since "the standard applied in the Warthegau is usually stricter than that which the guidelines allow for."[49] Yet once these standards took effect on March 4, Greiser refused to disseminate them to the public and made sure that his administration only adhered to those he specified.[50] This give and take relationship exemplified Greiser's savvy political maneuvering, but there was also a personal element to why he and the SD men in Poznań saw eye to eye. A native of the region over which he now ruled, Greiser constantly presented himself as the consummate "ethnic fighter," a hardnosed radical who would always push the envelope when it came to the *Volkstumskampf.* Hitler chose him to govern the Warthegau precisely because he was a "child of the East."[51]

For all their militant exclusivity, however, Greiser and his associates were no less fervent believers in the myth of "lost German blood" – a recurring motif in the correspondence of Nazi functionaries stationed in the Wartheland. Egon Leuschner of the Racial Policy Office concluded in late 1940 that a huge number of native-born Germans must have "gone native" in the decades after the First World War; how else could one explain the presence of so many inhabitants who "claim to think and feel Polish, yet stand out in their entire way of life from the Polish population surrounding them"?[52] Another of Greiser's confidants, Alexander Dolezalek, who headed the UWZ settlement staff in Poznań, speculated that a majority of the regional landowning class – the principal target of the deportations – possessed "Nordic blood," and he was perhaps the only Nazi to break orthodoxy and suggest that this substance did not necessarily beget anti-German sentiment or resistance to foreign domination.[53] Following Krumey's lead, Höppner estimated that 550,000 local Poles were "racially valuable" and "capable of re-Germanization," while Karl Coulon, Greiser's ethnicity adviser, put the figure at between 10 and 12 percent. He was convinced that "for centuries the blood of German colonists (*deutsches Kolonistenblut*) has flowed into the Polish nation," and furthermore contended that "the Polanians, one of the Slavic-speaking tribes from which the Polish nation arose, were Nordic."[54]

It was Greiser himself who authored the most forceful explication of how racial imperialism fit within the context of the "ethnic struggle." He spoke of "German blood" as something that had been "seized again and again by the Poles through violence, trickery, hateful oppression, and clever propaganda." To understand "how dangerous German blood on the opposing side can be," one needed only to look at "the examples of the German-Polish border war of 1918-1920 and the Polish campaign [of 1939], where Polish generals and admirals with German blood were the ones who defended themselves

[49] BA R 43-II/136/56: Stuckart to Frick and Hess, February 8, 1941.
[50] Wolf, "Auf dem Weg," 42.
[51] Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 8, 15, 46.
[52] Egon Leuschner, *Nationalsozialistische Fremdvolkpolitik* (Berlin: Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP, 1940), 34-35.
[53] BA R 49/3066/55-58: Dolezalek, "Polenfrage im Warthegau," February 28, 1941.
[54] Quoted from Wolf, *Ideologie*, 473-475.

the longest and with the most bravery." These were just a few of the examples that showed "how often German blood has stood in the forefront of the struggle against Germandom," whether in the veins of "a politician or an academic, a priest or a soldier." Only an intensive program of "ethnic education" in the Old Reich would truly "recover" these "lost Germans"; in the meantime, however, they would join in the "great project of community-building" unfolding in the Warthegau and form bonds of fellowship with local Volksdeutsche, newcomers from Germany, and resettlers brought in from the Soviet Union. The cornerstone of this endeavor, as Greiser saw it, lay in a continual remembrance of things past: "The creative power of German blood, which has fertilized broad sections of Europe, now flows into the unity of *Volk* and Reich… The ethnic struggle must not fade from our historical memory."[55]

With all the obvious similarities between the stated aims of the DVL and those of the Re-Germanization Procedure, it is hardly surprising that the two often overlapped despite their formal separation. Once again, the "hunt for good blood" would not be constrained by tidy institutional barriers. The parallels were so pronounced, in fact, that even the agencies involved sometimes confused the one with the other.[56] According to one administrator in Danzig, "Germanizables are all those persons of German blood who do not meet the preconditions of the DVL and are instead chosen by the RuSHA or its Aussenstelle solely according to racial principles."[57] A colleague of his added, "In terms of ethnicity, they must be regarded in every respect as Poles."[58] The RuSHA likewise reiterated that acceptance into the WED "takes place exclusively on the basis of the applicant's racial worth" regardless of ethnic affiliation. Although their "racial phenotype" signaled that "the ancestors of these people once belonged to the German ethnic community," they could not enter the DVL because they had become "almost totally submerged in a foreign ethnicity and have no documentary evidence of their German descent."[59] This conceptual division seems to have worked quite well in many locales, for DVL commissioners frequently submitted the files of individuals whom they had rejected to the Aussenstelle for further consideration.[60] In the case of the Karkocz family, they explicitly recommended enrollment in the WED instead of the DVL; although "of pure Polish descent," the family "satisfied the racial prerequisites [for the former]." They picked the same alternative for Thadäus Prusak, in large part because his sons belonged to a Polish paramilitary militia.[61] In practice, however, the boundaries between the two were far more porous. Ermin Künzel complained that the tendency to refer to people in groups 3 and 4 as Germanizables in official

[55] USHMMA 15.029M/1/6/58-61: Greiser, "Gedanken zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[56] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 794.
[57] BA R 70/221/58-59: Stuntz to Regierungspräsidenten, August 13, 1943.
[58] USHMMA 15.168M/NTN198/178: Huth to Landräte, Oberbürgermeister, and Regierungspräsidenten in Danzig-West Prussia, February 28, 1944.
[59] BA R 186/11: Hämmerlein, "Staat und Rasse," undated.
[60] See the forms for people whom the DVL offices turned over to the RuSHA in USHMMA 15.021M/2/11.
[61] USHMMA 15.007M/16/228/24-25: "Entscheidung betr. die Familie Karkocz," unsigned, January 31, 1944; USHMMA 15.007M/16/228/47-48: Entscheidung betr. die Familie Prusak," unsigned, January 31, 1944.

communication led to all kinds of "inconsistencies and misunderstandings" that obscured the "essential meaning of the WED procedure."[62] For one thing, UWZ "displacement" squads sometimes uprooted inhabitants who had already signed up for the DVL to acquire their farms; accidentally or not, the Eignungsprüfer sent some of these people to Germany as WED candidates.[63] It was also not uncommon for re-Germanizables to find their way onto the rolls of the DVL along with relatives back in Poland.[64]

Himmler's envisioned resettlement of all subjects in groups 3 and 4 promised eventually to erase such distinctions altogether. Despite his eagerness to begin, a large-scale "transplantation" (*Verpflanzung*) was not possible in the spring of 1941, though technicians at the RKF Staff Main Office, expecting a quick victory over the Soviets, were nevertheless hard at work preparing for it.[65] That summer, Greifelt organized a network of transit camps in Germany for the temporary accommodation of thousands of families from groups 3 and 4 of the DVL.[66] Greiser was equally desirous to get rid of these people by forcing them into the Re-Germanization Procedure and had been pushing in this direction for some time. In his view, one had to strike a happy medium between the two cardinal issues of the day: the "leaching [*Auslaugung*] of enemy nations (conservation of Nordic blood)," and the "strengthening of the ethnic front." Though adamant that members of groups 3 and 4 should be assimilated, he worried that they would endanger the prosecution of the *Volkstumskampf* in the Warthegau and proposed transferring them to Germany instead, where the attendant political risks of "recovering German blood" would supposedly diminish and any "racial undesirables" could be sterilized later. With respect to the "renegades" of Group 4, he was emphatic on this point: "There is no place for ethnic traitors on an ethnic battlefront. They must be removed from the combat zone!"[67] The catastrophic economic and political consequences of such a drastic undertaking, however, could not be ignored. Coulon advocated as early as February 1941 that resettlements should only proceed insofar as substitute laborers were available to replace those who left the Warthegau. During a conference at the Interior Ministry in mid-May, therefore, the emissaries of the Gauleiter blocked Himmler's plan, not only because it entailed the loss of irreplaceable workers, but in light of the political discontent indiscriminate deportations to the Reich would provoke.[68]

While Himmler bristled with impatience, Greiser prevaricated. Although he assented to the "transplantation" of registrants in Group 4 in April 1941, almost a year went by before he followed

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[62] BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," May 18, 1944.
[63] USHMMA 15.021M/5/35/76-77: Chybinski to Schmidt, September 11, 1942.
[64] BA NS 19/150/61-62: Creutz to Brandt, February 20, 1943; BA R 49/73/152: Hintze to HSSPFs, April 8, 1943.
[65] BA R 186/32: Kleinschmidt, "Vermerk betr. Behandlung der in die DVL Gruppe 3 und 4 aufgenommenen Personen," May 19, 1941.
[66] BA R 186/32: Greifelt to Ehlich, Seldte, Lorenz, Greiser, and HSSPFs, undated [summer 1941].
[67] BA R 43-II/146/57-61: Greiser to Gauämter in Wartheland, January 26, 1941. Also see Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 275fn.
[68] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 326; Wolf, "Auf dem Weg," 39.

through on this pledge, and even then he only sanctioned a limited operation.[69] Grateful just to have extracted that from the Gauleiter, Himmler gave his men the go-ahead on February 16, 1942, when he issued a directive calling for the immediate relocation of the "renegades" to Germany.[70] Significantly, it was SD officers who handled the particulars, though even they could not persuade Greiser to set aside his concerns and up the numbers. A supplementary ordinance from July of that year announced that "Because of the current difficult situation in all sectors of the war economy… the desired resettlement of members of Group 4 of the DVL into the territories of the Reich is not possible. For the time being, only individual transfers will take place, which will focus on persons whose resettlement appears exigent for political or security reasons."[71] Though clearly a half measure, this arrangement actually suited both parties quite well: Himmler garnered more of the very people he believed had "the most valuable Nordic blood" by taking these "politically hostile elements" off of Greiser's hands.

Although no surviving document directly proves it, Himmler must have come to similar agreements with the other Gauleiter in western Poland, because it is certain that the SS admitted people from Group 3 and Group 4 into the Re-Germanization Procedure, if only in small numbers. At the RKF Staff Main Office, Fähndrich began including "members of Group 3 of the DVL" in his instructions and reporting on the WED as early as July 1941.[72] In October of that year, SD operatives in Upper Silesia received instructions from the RKF to start transporting them to the Reich at once.[73] The following month, the RuSHA Race Office confirmed the resettlement of one contingent from West Prussia to Magdeburg.[74] Transports arrived in Braunschweig around the same time carrying people from Group 3 as well as Group 4; by February 1942, the number of the former located there had risen to 157.[75] In addition, in November 1943 the inventory of WED candidates in SS-District West listed ninety-two residents from Group 3.[76] Existing source material, scarce though it is, suggests the following scenario: acting on tips from the DVL branches, the police apprehended individuals they deemed potential security threats – particularly those whose "current agricultural property must be requisitioned for other purposes" (that is, ethnic German colonization) – and temporarily detained them in local transit camps, shipping them

[69] USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/51: Himmler to Greiser, July 28, 1942; Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 463.
[70] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/150-157: Himmler, "Behandlung der in Abt. 4 der DVL eingtragenen Personen," February 16, 1942.
[71] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/230-233: Streckenbach to SD- and Staatspolizei(leit)stellen, July 1, 1942.
[72] BA R 49/73/52-53: Fähndrich to Hofmann, Ehlich, Schwalm, and HSSPFs, July 30, 1941.
[73] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/66-80: "Allgemeine Anordnung über die Behandlung der in die DVL aufgenommenen Personen," unsigned, October 14, 1941
[74] BA NS 2/88/25: Klinger, "Aktenvermerk betr. Ansatz der aus Danzig-Westpreussen stammenden Personen der Abt. 3 der DVL," November 7, 1941.
[75] NLH Hann. 180 Lüneburg Acc. 3/108 Nr. 14: Pancke to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, December 15, 1941; NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim Acc. 132/90 Nr. 202: Regierungspräsident Hildesheim to Landrat Hildesheim, November 11, 1941; NLH Hann. 180 Lüneburg Acc. 3/108 Nr. 14: Pancke to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, January 31, 1942.
[76] USHMMA 15.015M/4/252/14-15: Hübner to Ansiedlungsstäbe in Wartheland, November 14, 1941; LNWD BR 1312 Nr. 160: Gutenberger to Finanzamt Düsseldorf, November 20, 1943.

westward once the HSSPFs had procured jobs and accommodations in the Reich.[77] We do not know how many people from Group 3 entered the WED in this way – the RuSHA counted 550 as of September 25, 1942 – though the amount was substantial enough to oblige Ehlich to establish a "delimitation of competencies" concerning responsibility for their welfare between the RKF and the VoMi.[78]

Our picture of what happened to the "renegades" of Group 4 is even murkier, the documentation even more fragmentary and inconclusive. One SS officer noted that the UWZ commandos had already begun moving some of them to Germany in May 1941; in July of the following year, Greifelt instructed the HSSPFs in Germany to expect the imminent arrival of more initiates from this category, and similar actions continued sporadically in the area around Poznań at least until April 1943.[79] HSSPF Gutenberger reported that same month that there were thirty-nine WED candidates from this category living under his supervision in Westphalia.[80] Though it appears that most subjects hailed from the Wartheland, one source implies that they may have come from elsewhere as well. On March 19, 1942, an unnamed official at the Reich Transportation Ministry wrote to the heads of the Reichsbahn in West Prussia, Upper Silesia, and the Wartheland to inquire about the provenance of a contingent of railroad workers and electricians in Innsbruck who belonged to Group 4.[81] It seems that this entire venture transpired under a veil of secrecy. Himmler had cautioned Greiser in July 1941 to forego including outside agencies in the initiative and proceed "in silence… without any big order" so as to avoid infuriating Party leaders in the Reich who obviously would not take kindly to the SS dropping suspected subversives into their laps.[82] The RKF and the RuSHA kept these admissions off the books too; although they listed members of Group 3 in their statistics on the WED, they compiled separate tabulations for candidates in Group 4, which have since disappeared.[83] At any rate, the number of inductees plucked from the ranks of the DVL clearly stood far below Himmler's initial projections and probably amounted to no more than several thousand people. One RKF employee stated in April 1943 that "Although the achievement of Germanization requires the complete separation of this circle of persons from a Polish environment… at this time it is still only possible to relocate individual families."[84]

If Himmler and Greiser agreed on the advisability of removing "ethnically questionable elements" from the Warthegau – even if they could not actually do so to the extent they desired – a bitter

[77] USHMMA 15.015M/4/252/14-15: Hübner to Ansiedlungsstäbe in Wartheland, November 14, 1941.

[78] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942; BA R 186/31: Ehlich, "Vermerk betr. Zuständigkeitsabgrenzung VoMi und RKF Stabshauptant," November 6, 1942.

[79] BA R 186/32: Kleinschmidt, "Vermerk betr. Behandlung der in die DVL Gruppe 3 und 4 aufgenommenen Personen," May 19, 1941; BA R 186/3: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 28, 1942; BA R 186/32: Hintze to HSSPFs, April 8, 1943. Also see Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 463fn.

[80] LNWD BR 0005, Nr. 19996: "Liste der im Dienstberich der HSSPF West eingesetzten Angehörigen der DVL Abt. 4," April 1, 1943.

[81] BA R 5/6774: Dorpmüller to Reichsbahn Zentralämter, March 19, 1942.

[82] USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/51: Himmler to Greiser, July 28, 1942.

[83] USHMMA 15.007/9/113/13-17: Greifelt to HSSPFs, July 28, 1942.

[84] BA R 49/73/152: Hintze to HSSPFs, April 8, 1943.

controversy soon emerged there over the role of racial selection within the DVL. Extrapolations conducted by the RSHA foresaw the screening of nearly two million people in groups 3 and 4 – the preliminary step to their anticipated transfer to the Reich – and Himmler of course assumed that the RuSHA would oversee this mammoth enterprise.[85] Yet while the Interior Ministry regulation of March 1941 provided for the racial examination of "ethnic aliens" who could not verify German descent, it did not indicate which agency would carry this out, leaving a back door open for the Gauleiter to contest the issue – which they did.[86] Greiser for one had good reason to fear Himmler's designs. He had learned all he needed to know about the methods of the Eignungsprüfer from Höppner, who had repeatedly picked fights with them as chief of the UWZ in Poznań. Coulon also recoiled at the idea of prioritizing anthropological conceptions of race: "The ethnic Germans are under the impression that we place scant value on service in the ethnic-political struggle of the past, and that in the end a Pole who receives a favorable racial evaluation will be treated better than a proven ethnic German who does not have such a favorable racial phenotype." Greiser criticized this approach too, proclaiming that anyone who equated the "racial composition" of the Poles with that of "Germanic peoples" was guilty of "the most reprehensible dilettantism."[87] If anything, he wanted the race examiners to concentrate on the "elimination of those who are decidedly racially inferior," not just perform "a pick of the crop [*Spitzenauslese*]."[88] Höppner likewise castigated the "lenience" of the RuSHA and instead advocated a *völkisch* format of classification with heavy eugenic overtones: "This totally one-sided procedure, which considers only the phenotype, not only ignores the selection of asocials, the congenitally ill, and politically incriminated persons, but also does not give any attention to activity on behalf of the community."[89]

Ignorant or dismissive of these attacks, the leaders of the RuSHA wasted no time in pressing the advantage Himmler had bestowed upon them. On April 25, 1941, the Bruno K. Schultz released provisional guidelines that not only encompassed all current members of groups 3 and 4, but also gave the Eignungsprüfer license to approve new ones – all in the name of expanding the WED: "The applicants found suitable by the RuSHA on the basis of their racial worth will enter the Volksliste. They must then be raised into full-fledged Germans or re-Germanized in the Old Reich." Schwalm presented municipal authorities in Łódź with an ultimatum on May 5, demanding permission to begin evaluating the city's inhabitants in short order and reassuring them (disingenuously) that he and his men would focus only on the "eradication of racially and biologically contaminated elements." On May 22, however, he learned that the Interior Ministry, in conjunction with the RKF Staff Main Office and the SD, would only consent to the screening of registrants with fewer than two German grandparents, not everyone in groups 3 and

[85] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 260-262; Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 131.
[86] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 382.
[87] USHMMA 15.029M/1/6/58-61: Greiser, "Gedanken zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[88] BA R 43-II/146/57-61: Greiser to Gauämter in Wartheland, January 26, 1941.
[89] From the reports of Höppner and Coulon in the fall of 1941, see Wolf, *Ideologie*, 320-321, 475-476.

4.[90] When Schwalm launched a "test sifting" around the same time that ended up rejecting of sixteen out of twenty families examined, he came under fire from administrators who were concerned that the stringency of this approach would cast off far too many "proven" Volksdeutsche.[91] Heydrich also expressed reservations about giving the race examiners carte blanche. In late May, he chastised Hofmann for being overly presumptuous and reminded him that a racial inspection of subjects with "at least 50% German ancestry" would contradict the dictum that "not a single drop of German blood may go missing." From this perspective, the methodology of the RuSHA jeopardized the goal of racial consolidation. All the same, he endorsed Schultz's pitch and raised the target figure to 3.3 million people, around eight hundred thousand of whom, he predicted, would enter the DVL.[92] Armed with this sponsorship, Schwalm and Hofmann moved forward with their planning in the summer of 1941. Yet while conceding that "accepting only individuals categorized as RuS-I or II would deliver too small of a result," they continued to insist on their right to evaluate every current and future member of groups 3 and 4 on the grounds that "many persons who have at least half German descent are racially inferior." The entire purpose of the Volksliste, they contended, was to "reclaim" not just "German blood," but "*valuable* German blood."[93]

The Reichsführer-SS concurred; on September 30, 1941, he authorized the RuSHA to appraise anyone in Group 3 "with one or more non-German grandparents."[94] The Gauleiter and his aides were outraged. Greiser argued that these examinations would not only consume an inordinate amount of time and resources, but incite political unrest by undermining previous verdicts and blurring the line between Germans and Poles. Coulon likewise maintained that it would be premature for the DVL offices to tackle the "racial issue" before they had dealt with the "ethnic issue" of segregation.[95] That they eventually acceded to Himmler's wishes (at least in part) can be attributed to several factors. As mentioned above, Greiser was keen on purging "biologically inferior elements" and knew full well that the "fitness inspectors" (as their title implied) were no lightweights when it came to racial hygiene. Although the anthropological criteria of the RuSHA could trump an "unfavorable" ethnic-political judgment, they were restrictive enough to curb the wide-ranging stratagem championed by Greiser's rivals at the Interior Ministry (Stuckart most notably).[96] In short, the Gauleiter recognized that sooner or later the wheat would have to be separated from the chaff, and there was no reason to risk a full-scale confrontation with the SS when both sides seemed to want the same thing. Himmler also made persuasive concessions. He promised

[90] USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/31-33: Schwalm to Uebelhoer, May 5, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/3: Schwalm, "Vermerk betr. die Besprechung über die Durchführerung der Musterungen der Wertungsgruppen," May 24, 1941.
[91] IPN AGK 167/39/3-5: Schwalm, "Aktennotiz betr. rassische Musterungen in der DVL," May 24, 1941.
[92] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/5: Heydrich to Hofmann, May 26, 1941.
[93] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/14-15: Schwalm, "Befehlsentwurf für die rassische Überprüfung der Gruppen III und IV der DVL," June 15, 1941[emphasis in original].
[94] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/137-138: Himmler, "Anordnung 50/II," September 30, 1941.
[95] Wolf, "Auf dem Weg," 43-44.
[96] Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen*, 410.

Greiser that the RuSHA would only perform a "negative selection" to "eradicate the contaminated elements before their entry into the Deutsche Volksliste," and he granted that the excision of those who had already gained entry would only occur once their actual physical ejection from the Wartheland became possible, allowing the Gauleiter to retain them as "German" laborers in the meantime.[97] Since the Eignungsprüfer could not remove entrants judged to be RuS-IV or IVf from the rolls of the Volksliste (outside of a few exceptional cases), they instead did whatever they could to hinder their ability to reproduce, mainly by sending lists to the Landräte and the public health offices detailing the names of subjects whom they had rejected, which thus made it impossible for them to obtain a marriage license.[98]

Beginning in the late autumn of 1941, Schwalm installed two race examiners apiece in each of the DVL district offices in Łódź, Poznań, and Inowrocław and put together five mobile "registration commandos" to conduct examinations in the outlying counties of the Warthegau, which began on February 10, 1942 and lasted until around Easter. During the first phase of the operation, the DVL branch offices collected "supplementary questionnaires" from entrants and used the information to fill out special index cards, which they then forwarded to the Aussenstelle. Beyond basic personal data, these cards contained the subject's genealogical tree, complete with percentiles of descent, as well as a column listing any "social abnormalities," such as criminality, alcoholism and "asocial behavior." They then summoned the persons in question to appear for a "retroactive evaluation," after which the Eignungsprüfer recorded each of their "race formulas" on the corresponding index card and submitted them to the responsible DVL branch with an attached verdict.[99] In this fashion, the RuSHA vetted over thirty thousand people in a mere two months. That was not enough to satisfy Himmler, however. In February 1942, he told Hofmann to have Schwalm start screening the "renegades" of Group 4 as well.[100] The impetus for this move is not all that hard to figure out: Himmler had resolved to send these people to Germany that same month, meaning they would have to undergo a racial investigation beforehand. Although Greiser confined the deportations to those thought to represent a clear and present danger, he placed no such restrictions on their classification. His amenability did not end there either. In early March, he permitted the race examiners to assay not only members of groups 3 and 4, but all "questionable cases," partners in ethnically mixed marriages (as well as their children), and persons whom the DVL commissioners had previously discarded for lacking proof of "50% German ancestry."[101] Over the next few months, he also commanded all branch offices in the Warthegau to consult the RuSHA on each applicant who seemed likely to qualify

[97] Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 210.

[98] USHMMA 15.021M/6/17/2: Mehlhorn to Regierungspräsidenten in Posen, Hohensalza, and Litzmannstadt, July 8, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/5: Hübner to Dongus, November 18, 1942.

[99] USHMMA 15.021/6/41/47-49: Schwalm, "Entwurf eines Vorschlags über die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem RuSHA und der DVL bei der rassischen Musterung der Deutschstämmigen," undated; USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/22: Schultheiss to Dongus and DVL Zweigstellen in Wartheland, March 6, 1942.

[100] BA NS 2/89/112: Hofmann to Schultz, February 12, 1942.

[101] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/22: Schultheiss to Dongus and DVL Zweigstellen in Wartheland, March 6, 1942.

for Group 3 or Group 4.[102] With this entitlement, the evaluations became much more than just a "negative selection"; they became truly affirmative. As one leading figure at Race Office later explained, "Wherever pure German ancestry is either no long discernible with certainty or there is evidence of partial non-German descent, acceptance into the DVL is contingent upon a racial examination."[103] The Eignungsprüfer, in other words, could now suggest additions as well as subtractions. By the spring of 1942, the DVL procedure in the Wartheland had mutated into an "all out search for Germanic blood."[104]

We have an instructive window into the mindset of the men who carried out these examinations thanks to a painstaking summary report composed in late May 1942 by Walter Dongus, Schwalm's successor as head of the Aussenstelle. For Dongus, the initiative did indeed closely approximate "the character of a racial-biological culling" of "Mongoloid and Asiatic elements" along with "other alien race-types." "The tracking of these alien blood-lines and their subsequent eradication," he emphasized, "is a biological necessity." In mapping out their spatial distribution, Dongus drew on the well-established intellectual trope of a European "cultural gradient," and produced two graphs to display the "decline in racial value from west to east." Dongus' portrait was far from negative, however. Although he described "the most varied permutations" of racial mixing and admitted that "Nordic types of purer value are rare," he also concluded that their "blood contribution is not insignificant." His statistics bore out these observations. Between February and May, the RuSHA had assessed 70,929 people within the framework of the Volksliste, about 80 percent of all subjects registered in groups 3 and 4 at that time. Out of this overall total, only 922 subjects (1.3 percent) received the grade RuS-I, whereas 5,724 were RuS-IV (8.07 percent) and only 673 were RuS-IVf (0.34 percent). The overwhelming majority fell into category RuS-II (31,528 persons, 44.46 percent) and RuS-III (32,082 persons, 45.24 percent). Dongus was optimistic about the future too, since "further applications will arrive at the branch offices and these must likewise be examined." In closing, he praised the DVL for enhancing the "extraction of valuable German blood," which could now be "reclaimed for our *Volk* through the Re-Germanization Procedure."[105]

Many police and administrative officials in the Warthegau remained unconvinced. The government president of Poznań, Dr. Viktor Böttcher, refused to admit individuals whom the DVL offices had already rebuffed, regardless of their "racial grade." To his mind, the Gauleiter had only approved a "negative selection," and he implored superiors to suspend this practice immediately. "It is becoming ever more apparent," he wrote to Greiser, "that two different ideas stand in opposition to each other. While one of them determines capability for Germanization according to education, behavior, and character, the other does so merely according to external appearance. In the end, history will decide which method is the

[102] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 437-438.
[103] BA NS 2/159/31-32: Klinger to Stuckart, June 15, 1944.
[104] Koehl, *RKFDV*, 160.
[105] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/65-80: Dongus, "Bericht über die Eignungsuntersuchungen in der DVL im Reichsgau Wartheland," May 29, 1942.

more correct."[106] One like-minded commentator elaborated on this position: "We have the right to deny access to our people to any random blond, blue-eyed yet otherwise typical Pole – or a blonde Swede, for that matter – if their character traits reveal them to be scoundrels."[107] Protests emerged from within the ranks of the SS as well. Höppner let Dongus know in mid-May 1942 that the SD contingent in Poznań opposed accepting Polish-speaking indigenes into the DVL on the basis of "racial fitness" alone. He felt it was high time to wrap up the registration process as quickly as possible, irrespective of "whether someone has a drop of German blood or not."[108] The recruitment agencies of the Wehrmacht also raised objections, not because they considered the protocol too inclusive, but because it often disqualified conscripts from Group 3, some of whom had already been deployed at the front. Some DVL offices circumvented the Eignungsprüfer by re-classifying able-bodied men into higher categories where RuSHA strictures held no validity. After a lengthy bout of fighting over the fate of a group of eighty-one draftees in the autumn of 1942, Greiser finally ruled that "removal from the Wehrmacht will not take place in any cases where the person in question is already at the front. Serious racial concerns must then be dropped."[109] Military prerogatives still came first.

Beyond that though, Greiser did very little himself to restrain the licensed activity of the race inspectors. And so the examinations continued in spite of heated resistance from his subordinates. In June 1942, the RuSHA "registration commandos" moved into the counties of Łask, Turek, and Sieradz; the next month, they were in Gostyń, Jarocin, Oborniki, Ostrowo, Mogilno, Łęczyca, Chodzież, Kutno, and Krotoszyn.[110] In October, a team of inspectors screened 15,117 residents in the county of Kępno alone, and here too they endeavored to supply candidates for the WED. As Dongus put, it, "All those persons who constitute a racially desirable population increase yet must be denied entry into the Deutsche Volksliste on account of insufficient German descent should be admitted into the Re-Germanization Procedure."[111] The following March, a further nineteen thousand "Polonized Germans" in Wolsztyn underwent racial testing to ascertain their "capacity for re-Germanization" as well[112] However much he may have detested it, Höppner still had to solicit the services of Dongus and his subordinates to finalize admission proceedings for "questionable" DVL cases "because the results of the racial evaluation can

[106] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 429-430, 433.
[107] *Das Kurzthema. Fremdvolkpolitik* (Vienna: Gauschulungsamt der NSDAP, 1943), 4-7.
[108] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 454.
[109] USHMMA 15.021M/6/40/23: Teichmann to Dongus, September 21, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/40/29: Steinhaus to Teichmann, October 1, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/40/34: Mehlhorn to Dongus, December 18, 1942.
[110] See the lists of examinee names for June and July 1942 sent by the Aussenstelle to the Landräte in these districts in USHMMA 15.021M/2/10 and 15.021M/1/9.
[111] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/84-92: Dongus, "Abschlussbericht über die DVL-Überprüfung in Kempen," November 23, 1942.
[112] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 266-267.

have essential significance in these cases."[113] They had "essential significance" for Pelagia Szelest and her family. In 1943, the Gestapo in Łódź appended the following statement to her file, which already contained reports of "un-German" behavior: "Pelagia Szelest is of 50% German origin. Her husband Stanislaus is a Pole… After initial placement in Group 3, the family was demoted to the fourth group due to their strong Polonization. However, during a meeting of the DVL branch office in Ostrowo, Pelagia and her children were again placed in Group 3. The move was justified on the basis of a thorough racial evaluation of the family."[114] For the Szelests, race did not function as a rationale for exclusion from the *Volksgemeinschaft*; it offered them a way in.

Still, Greiser's tolerance of the RuSHA only extended so far. If we look closely at his ranking of priorities, it becomes abundantly clear that, while he awarded the Eignungsprüfer substantial latitude, he had no intention of giving them free reign. Although the Gauleiter certainly acknowledged the importance of the "hunt for good blood," neither he nor his allies and subordinates thought it should it supersede the prosecution of a harsh "ethnic struggle." The more "generous" ordinances released by the Interior Ministry in the spring of 1941 actually changed little about the praxis of the DVL commissions on the ground, especially since here SD officers exerted a disproportionate influence.[115] As one of them confided to a colleague, the formal guidelines drafted by Stuckart "do not correspond to the actual methodology of the Volksliste procedure… Incorporation takes place first and foremost according to principles of ethnic affiliation and German ancestry… Members of Group 3 are not always subjected to a racial evaluation… Only with members of Group 4 does this occur invariably."[116] Even when they did participate in the deliberations – and they were ignored in many cases – the race examiners more often than not proved unable to overrule their rivals. The statistics for enrollment are edifying in this regard. In late October 1940, there were 333,700 individuals registered in the Warthegau DVL; by January 1943, that number had only increased to 475,743, with 84.37 percent in groups 1 and 2, leaving 74,371 in groups 3 and 4.[117]

Although the Eignungsprüfer carried out well over one hundred thousand investigations in the Warthegau, the twin pillars of Greiser's model more or less remained the same as before: ethnic-political reliability and evidence of descent from at least two German grandparents. For him, race primarily meant "certified" blood ties, not physiognomy, and eugenic criteria, as he saw it, should only come into play as a mechanism of exclusion. "I personally believe," he announced in April 1943, "that racial suitability where little German ancestry is present cannot lead [to a situation] where entry into the Deutsche

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[113] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/45: Höppner to Dongus, February 24, 1943; USHMMA 15.021M/6/39/62: Höppner to Dongus, April 30, 1943.

[114] Jan Grabowski and Zbigniew R. Grabowski, "Germans in the Eyes of the Gestapo: The Ciechanów District, 1939-1945," *Contemporary European History* 13, no.1 (February 2004): 28fn.

[115] Wolf, "Auf dem Weg," 42; Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 238.

[116] BA R 59/46/24-27: Stibert to Cassell, November, 22 1944.

[117] BA R 186/32: "Übersicht der Gauleitung Wartheland," unsigned, January 1, 1943. Also see "333,700 Volksdeutsche im Gau," *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* 26 (October 1940).

Volksliste comes into question."[118] Even men who had fought for Germany during the First World War found no sanctuary in Greiser's DVL if they could not meet these prerequisites because, as he phrased it, "neither service in the old German army nor the camaraderie of company and barrack hindered the Polish bailiff from giving free rein to his murderous sadism during the abduction campaign against the Germans in September 1939."[119] All of this goes to show that the SS could not simply ride roughshod over the Gauleiter. Although willing to cooperate to an extent, Greiser more than demonstrated that he had the power to limit Himmler's ambitious masterplan of racial reclamation if he so chose. At the end of the day, *völkisch* imperatives still held sway in the Wartheland. Yet much like the Reichsführer-SS, Greiser ultimately validated this approach by framing it as a necessary remedy to the errors of the Nazis' predecessors. "Whoever believes in the desirability of Germanizing the Poles does not understand history," he wrote in one memorandum, "Such people have not sufficiently observed the lessons of Prussian *Polenpolitik*." "The lessons of history" taught him that "it is decisive for every ethnic policy to strive for and achieve the consolidation, growth, and unconditional purity of our most precious nation and race. In the field of ethnic policy, National Socialism has overthrown the old statist way of thinking."[120]

For all his revolutionary pretensions, however, none of the initiatives implemented under Greiser's aegis brought him any closer to accomplishing his vision of a "melting pot" where all "persons of German blood" would live together in harmony. As one of his men reported in January 1943, "The individual German groups in the Gau still have not totally merged. They often distinguish themselves from each other, while maintaining very strong ties among themselves, so that the creation of a tightly obedient *Volksgemeinschaft* is fraught with difficulties." While Party activists intoned, "We are all one tribe, we are Germans," and instructed their compatriots to "avoid designations that make a distinction," a popular doggerel ran, "The Baltic Germans speak Russian, the ethnic Germans speak Polish, the Poles speak German, and the Reich Germans are speechless."[121] Immigrants from the Reich often looked down on the native Volksdeutsche and wrote them off as "crypto-Poles."[122] The Volksdeutsche resented this condescending demeanor, of course, as well as the special advantages conferred upon itinerant ethnic German Umsiedler, whom they in turn viewed as culturally backward competitors for housing and jobs. For their part, the resettlers not only mistrusted Germans who stemmed from regional backgrounds different from their own, but railed against Polish employers and coworkers who secured positions of authority over them by virtue of membership in the DVL.[123] The daily threat of assassination by an increasingly brash Polish resistance movement, swelled with recruits from the vengeful legions of the

[118] Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 212.
[119] "Die Volkstumsfrage," *Südostdeutsche Rundschau* 6 (August 1942).
[120] USHMMA 15.029M/1/6/58-61: Greiser, "Gedanken zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[121] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/65: "Merkblatt für Deutschstämmigen im Warthegau," undated; Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 175-176.
[122] Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 268-269.
[123] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 748-749.

"displaced" and the dispossessed, cast an ever greater shadow of fear and insecurity over all of these factions. Instead of a prototype for the future Nazi New Order in the East, by 1943 the Warthegau had become a hotbed of intra-ethnic tensions, social recrimination, political instability, and casual violence.

If Greiser's firm resolve to control the tenor of policy-making within his Gau was typical of other Nazi satraps, his counterpart to the north, Albert Forster, took this domineering style to a whole new level. Having already solidified his grip over the Nazi Party bureaucracy in the Free City of Danzig during the 1930s, the outbreak of war enabled Forster to extend his reach into the so-called Polish Corridor (Pomerelia). Shunning both local ethnic German politicians as well as the civil servants of the Interior Ministry, he established a veritable stranglehold over the administration of the region by filling nearly all of the important posts with his lackeys, despite their nigh universal reputation for drunkenness, brutality, and ineptitude. He also considered the definition of Germanness to be a Party matter from the outset, which is why transferred responsibility for nationality determinations to committees composed of NSDAP Kreis- and Ortsgruppenleiter, told state officials in no uncertain terms to rubber-stamp their decisions, and sacked anyone who opposed him.[124] He had no love for the SS either. Whereas Greiser was at least open to collaboration with Himmler, Forster quickly became one of his most dogged antagonists. Although he had named each of the Gauleiter in incorporated eastern territories as delegates of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of German Ethnicity, Forster snubbed even this largely informal title, lest it imply some kind of political subordination. That he let around fifty thousand ethnic German resettlers reside within his domain was nothing short of miraculous, for he saw these people as well as local Volksdeutsche as little more than contemptible proxies of the SS. The HSSPF assigned to the area, Richard Hildebrandt, ran into problems almost immediately. "In my long party experience," he wrote to Himmler, "I have never yet met with a Gau in which things are done so arbitrarily and with so little reason and sense."[125] As a result of this conflict with the SS, the system of classification that emerged in Danzig-West Prussia differed markedly from the one that prevailed in the Warthegau, even though Forster's ideas were not all that dissimilar.

In a nutshell, Forster and his men believed that virtually all of their subjects were German by blood. "In terms of race," he proclaimed on one occasion, "the population in Danzig-West Prussia makes no more of an unfavorable impression than the population of the adjacent Reich German territories or even the lands of Saxony and Thuringia." So long as the government showed "a steady and strong hand in the treatment of the ethnicity problem," most of the indigenous inhabitants could easily be detached from

[124] Gerhard Wolf, "Suitable Germans: Enforced Assimilation Policies in Danzig-West Prussia, 1939-1945," in Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach, eds. *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 220.

[125] Herbert S. Levine, "Local Authority and the SS State: The Conflict over Population Policy in Danzig-West Prussia, 1939-1945," *Central European History* 2, no. 4 (December 1969): 340-342, 347-348, 350. For a good biography, see Dieter Schenk, *Hitlers Mann in Danzig. Albert Forster und die NS-Verbrechen in Danzig-Westpreussen* (Bonn: Dietz, 2000).

the Polish nation and "recovered for Germandom."[126] To the Reichsführer-SS, such a sweeping rubric of assimilation was no better than the "old methods" of the Imperial era: "What Gauleiter Forster writes about the Germanization of the native West Prussians is incomprehensible to me," he once remarked to Bormann.[127] When Himmler unveiled his Decree on the Examination and Sorting of the Population of the Incorporated Eastern Territories in September 1940, Forster did not even bother publishing it or passing it down the chain of command. Instead, like Greiser, he preempted the SS and the Interior Ministry by instituting his own set of regulations and ensuring that any ordinances from the administrative center in Berlin did not meaningfully alter the course he had already charted.[128] To defend himself against further charges of ideological laxity, he also appealed to perhaps the one man (other than Hitler) whom all of his opponents held in equally high esteem, the very man whose theories had informed the RuSHA praxis of racial selection from the beginning: Hans F.K. Günther. In November 1940, the Jena professor took a ten-day tour through the region and provided his "expert opinion" on Forster's plans, concluding that the population constituted an "inextricable racial mix," about 80 percent of which was "racially not unlike Germandom in east-central Germany."[129]

Equipped with the blessing of the "racial pope," on December 14, 1940 the Gauleiter released a twenty-page memorandum on the upcoming "Germanization Action" in Danzig-West Prussia, composed by his trusted adviser, Wilhelm Löbsack, with contributions from two historians: Dr. Detlev Krannhals, an associate of Günther, and Professor Erich Keyser, a notable Ostforscher. Given these sources of inspiration, it is hardly surprising that the document cited "empirical facts from the history of Germandom in the East" as the foundation for concrete administrative policy. The authors laid out a narrative in which tens of thousands of German families had "fallen completely under the spell of *Polentum*" over the previous forty years "due to the errors of German pre-war policy" and the "repressive policies of the Polish state." After locating these families, the operation would shift focus to the "Germanic leadership class and intelligentsia" (economic elites and Polish state officials) as well as "submerged fragments of Germandom from the nineteenth century and earlier time periods." The influence of racial-anthropological and eugenic formulations was unmistakable: while specifying the exclusion of asocials, the congenitally ill, habitual criminals, and "all persons with Mongolian and Asiatic blood," the text specified the inclusion of "only those persons or families… who cannot be distinguished in their appearance from our German ethnic comrades" and simultaneously asserted that one could "infer the presence of German blood directly from typical German capabilities and talents." Forster's preferred medium of integration, in fact, sounded a lot like the Re-Germanization Procedure itself: "Germanizables

[126] USHMMA 15.168M/NTN228/1: Ernst to Dahn, July 6, 1942.
[127] BA NS 2/61/30-31: Himmler to Bormann, May 20, 1940.
[128] BA R 70/210/71-78: Forster, "Ausführungsbestimmungen zur Verordnung über die DVL," May 21, 1941.
[129] USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN200/108: Löbsack to Habich, May 1942. Also see Wolf, "Suitable Germans," 223-225.

should gradually re-immerse themselves into the German nation… The process of Germanization must encourage a mental and spiritual fusion … Germanizables must remain under the perpetual influence of our ethnic ideal and our National Socialist worldview. A relaxation or interruption of this influence would mean regression, for these persons are not strongly rooted in Germandom."[130]

What truly made this paradigm stand out was that it granted almost complete control over decision-making to the agencies of the Nazi Party, even after the release of the March 1941 decrees and the establishment of the DVL offices in Danzig-West Prussia the following month. Above all, it was the lower echelons of the Party bureaucracy – the cell, block, community, and district leaders – who determined the "ethnic fate" (*völkische Schicksal*) of everyday people at the local level, and nothing better illustrates the mentality of these men than the comments of Waldemar Warras, the Kreisleiter of Toruń, at a meeting of DVL administrators on September 24, 1941. After meditating on the "settlement epochs of prior centuries," the "currents of German blood that have flowed into this land," and the exigent need to "seek out and regain this buried German blood" that "unwise German governments" had carelessly handed over to the Poles, Warras surmised that the average West Prussian "appears Polish on the outside" and "does not know to whom they belong," yet nonetheless remained German "in their core." "We do not want to make Germans out of Poles," he explained, "We want to reclaim Germans who have engaged in connections with *Polentum*." This was a duty reserved for the NSDAP alone: "The recommendation of the Party is final and cannot be overturned by shortsighted men, because here we are organizing the demographic structure not for tomorrow, but for the coming centuries." It did not matter "whether small mistakes are made," nor did it matter what the local populace thought: "Vox populi is the voice of cattle. We cannot under any circumstances pay attention to the criticism of the masses." In closing, he warned that any official who undermined Forster's policies would be referred to a Party court for disciplinary action. When a representative of the local ethnic German community asked if the decrees of the Interior Ministry should now be considered null and void, Warras replied that the commissions must avoid "getting tangled up in spiteful parliamentary quarrels." When the SD commander threatened to use his veto on any cases involving persons of Polish descent, Warras retorted that "the Gauleiter alone bears responsibility for the solution of ethnic questions" and abruptly ended the discussion.[131]

The defining characteristics of the DVL in Danzig-West Prussia were breadth and speed, and Nazi officials very much proceeded with a disposition to shoot first and ask questions later. Forster himself set the tone in July 1941. Frustrated by the slow rate of progress up to that point, he stressed "the importance of faster processing" and demanded that assessments take place "as swiftly as possible."[132] As the government president in Bydgoszcz put it, "It is better to decide quickly than to allow a state of limbo

[130] BA R 49/76/1-22: Forster, "Anordnung zur Durchführung der Eindeutschungsaktion," December 14, 1940.
[131] USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN201/50: Warras, "Bericht über die Sitzung beim Kreisleiter," September 24, 1941.
[132] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/34: Forster to Schimmel, July 24, 1941.

to persist through cumbersome and needless re-examinations."[133] Some Party officials worked at such a furious pace that they did not even wait for the approval of the civil administration to hand out the appropriate ID cards (blue for groups 1 and 2, green for Group 3, and red for Group 4).[134] When wartime personnel cutbacks forced Himmler and Stuckart to streamline the Volksliste procedure in early 1942, Forster was delighted.[135] To broaden the field of prospects, he issued a public appeal on February 24, 1942 to all residents who had heretofore turned down the opportunity to enroll and simplified the questionnaires so that they no longer had to provide any evidence of German descent to join Group 3. To accelerate the process yet further, he ordered that only people slated for Group 4 warranted a political investigation – for everyone else, summary judgments would suffice – and directed local administrators to "shelve all other tasks" and work "exclusively for the Deutsche Volksliste" until March 15, 1942, even on weekends. These measures signified a radical departure; in blatant contravention of directives from Berlin, Forster abandoned the pretense of voluntary registration and applied official pressure on his subjects: "Nobody should be overlooked if they are willing to return to the German ethnic community… However, anybody who spurns this offer must realize that in the future they will be openly labeled as Poles… It is self-evident that this also means the same treatment as the worst enemies of the German people."[136] In the years that followed, it was not uncommon for Nazi functionaries and policemen to show up at homes with "a deportation order in one hand and a DVL application in the other."[137]

As one might expect, the numbers jumped rapidly after this intervention. There were only around 31,000 DVL members in Danzig-West Prussia in December 1941; ten months later, there were nearly eight hundred thousand.[138] In the county of Tuchola, 90 percent of the inhabitants had identified themselves as Poles in previous censuses; once the DVL commissions got through with them, however, nearly 60 percent had signed on as "Germans." Several witnesses alleged that NSDAP functionaries sometimes simply registered whole villages and towns with the stroke of a pen.[139] A comparison with the figures from the Wartheland presents even more striking evidence of the disparity between a *völkisch* orientation and policies based on racial-anthropological principles. In that province, roughly 73,000 people were listed in groups 3 and 4 in January 1944, as opposed to 410,000 in groups 1 and 2, out of a total population of 4.4 million; in Danzig-West Prussia, there were 726,000 people in Group 3 alone, almost half of the entire native population of 1.65 million, with 220,000 in groups 1 and 2 and a mere two

[133] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/33: Schimmel to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, July 29, 1941.
[134] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/52: Schimmel to DVL Zweigstelle Thorn, September 24, 1941.
[135] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN198/40: Stuckart, "Zweite Verordnung über die Deutsche Volksliste und die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," January 31, 1942.
[136] BA R 70/210/106-110: Forster, "Richtlinien für die weitere Arbeit der DVL," February 22, 1942; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN198/92: Forster to Regierungspräsidenten in Danzig-West Prussia, July 2, 1942; USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN204/16: Forster, "Aufruf an die Bevölkerung Danzig-Westpreussens," February 24, 1942.
[137] Koehl, *RKFDV*, 140.
[138] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 420-421.
[139] Levine, "Local Authority and the SS State," 345.

thousand in Group 4.[140] The lure of Forster's model was so strong that it generated a "major fluctuation within the populace," an artificially induced wave of migration in which tens of thousands of civilians fled northwards from the Warthegau in the hope of attaining a more favorable verdict in Pomerelia.[141]

Each step of the way, Forster presided over this campaign of demographic upheaval and mass Germanization with an iron fist, wielding personal control over everyday practices of classification to a degree that bordered on obsession. He received weekly statistical reports on the growth of the DVL and always reserved the right to reject, oust, or approve candidates as he saw fit.[142] He unleashed an incessant stream of directives too; in July 1941 alone, his office published no fewer than nine separate decrees dealing with various aspects of the Deutsche Volksliste, most of which he authored himself.[143] He also regularly sat in on the meetings of the DVL commissions in counties throughout the Gau.[144] During one session in October 1942, the Gauleiter ruled positively in the case of a certain Opolski even though he was a former lieutenant colonel in the Polish Army. He also endorsed the admittance of a Kashubian musician named Wieczorek, though only on the condition that his past compositions did not have "anti-German tendencies."[145] In another instance, after hearing that the NSDAP branch leader in one village had rejected 80 percent of its Polish inhabitants, the Gauleiter showed up out of nowhere and gave him "such a dressing down in front of all the Germans and Poles that he promptly sat down, lined up all the Poles, and simply entered them onto the Volksliste."[146]

Yet perhaps nothing speaks to the grotesque and maniacal character of Forster's brand of *Volkstumspolitik* more demonstrably than the manner in which he manipulated the provincial justice and public health systems to further the aim of racial imperialism. On April 8, 1942, the attorney general (*Generalstaatsanwalt*) in Danzig, Walter Wohler, requested that public prosecutors keep the DVL offices apprised on all criminal charges and convictions involving individuals who had not yet signed up – not to keep them out, but to bring them in.[147] Wohler complained several weeks later to superiors in Berlin that the DVL branch in Grudziądz had accepted a man into Group 3 who had been sentenced to five years in prison for an assortment of crimes; he also appealed to the regional chief of the SD to overturn this ruling.[148] Over the course of subsequent months, DVL applications, questionnaires, and identity cards went out to the inmates of prisons across the region; in one town, the commissioners even convened a

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[140] LOC/NMT, 937-941: "Brief Facts about Settlement" (English transcript), unsigned, January, 1944.
[141] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 745-746.
[142] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/24-25: Nienater to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, July 15, 1941; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN198/117: Stuntz to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, November 30, 1942.
[143] See the list of decrees related to the DVL in Danzig-West Prussia in USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/1-5.
[144] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/80: Forster to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, January 9, 1942.
[145] USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN201/44-49: "Bericht über die DVL Sondersitzung," unsigned, October 21, 1942.
[146] Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 227-228.
[147] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/133: Wohler to Landgerichtspräsidenten and Oberstaatsanwälte in Danzig-West Prussia, April 8, 1942.
[148] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157266-72: Wohler to Schlegelberger, May 30, 1942.

session inside the local jail.[149] In the summer of 1942, the Gauleiter opened up the concentration camps for recruitment as well, and among the thirteen cases he personally adjudicated in October 1942, one of them concerned a convicted arsonist and three comprised political prisoners, one of whom had allegedly shot a German man and raped a fourteen year old German girl. All four families entered Group 3.[150] In an even more chilling manifestation of his relentlessness, Forster also commanded the DVL offices to register inmates of psychiatric hospitals, even those who were "congenitally ill and/or asocial." "From now on," one Party delegate noted, "no segment of the population is exempt."[151] Just to be safe though, such individuals would be sterilized as a perverse kind of insurance. On one occasion, a woman named Luise Kittel, who had been diagnosed with "severe imbecility," nevertheless gained access to the Volksliste because she belonged to an "old German evangelical family." "In spite of her racial and biological inferiority," one assessor opined, "it simply would not do to reject a person of pure German ancestry like Kittel from the DVL and thereby abandon her to the Poles." No matter what, "a German with grave racial and hereditary deficiencies still remains a German, and can simply be rendered harmless if necessary… that is, sterilized on account of feeble-mindedness."[152] In Danzig-West Prussia, the Nazis would leave no stone unturned in their search for "lost German blood."

These extreme methods quickly incurred the opprobrium of other high-ranking Nazis, none more strident in their condemnation than Forster's old foe, Arthur Greiser. In Greiser's view, what Forster was doing not only flagrantly contradicted the core tenets of Nazi racial ideology; it also undermined practices of classification in the Warthegau, not least by siphoning off families who had received an adverse judgment. But this dispute was not just a matter of ideology; it was personal. The rivalry between the two men went back to the 1930s, when Forster (as Gauleiter) and Greiser (as senate president) had battled for supremacy over the Free City of Danzig – a struggle the latter eventually lost. Driven by a resentful urge to unseat his nemesis, Greiser sent Himmler a number of scathing commentaries on Forster's policies and wasted no opportunity to ridicule them. In one memorandum, he stressed that in the Wartheland, as opposed to West Prussia, "a Pole remains a Pole."[153] He elaborated this position at a meeting of Nazi officials in March 1943: "You may dip a herring in wine, but by no means will a better fish come out… if you give a Pole who has no German blood in his veins an identification card for Group 3 or 4 of the DVL… they will by no means become Germans; that is a racial matter alone."[154] Yet no matter what he said, one key factor made it virtually impossible for him to affect the situation in West Prussia. Although

[149] ITS 1.2.7.10.4/82191487-490: Wohler to Schlegelberger, July 10, 1941.
[150] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/144: Gillhoff to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, October 5, 1942; USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN201/44-49: "Bericht über die DVL Sondersitzung," unsigned, October 21, 1942.
[151] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/117: Forster to DVL Offices, June 4, 1942; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/136: Moebes to DVL Offices, July 15, 1942.
[152] BA NS 2/159, Bd. 5-6: Vietz to Hildebrandt, January 31, 1944.
[153] USHMMA 15.029M/1/6/58-61: Greiser, "Gedanken zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik," undated.
[154] Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 95-96, 213-214.

Hitler charged both Forster and Greiser with carrying out "the devil's work" in their respective Gaue, as an "old fighter" of the Nazi movement, Forster had Hitler's ear and Greiser did not.

The Gauleiter of Danzig-West Prussia had other enemies too, far more dangerous because they operated within his fiefdom. Although he despised Himmler, Forster was smart enough to know that he could not maintain law and order, let alone "cleanse" the province of "undesirables," without the cooperation of SS security forces. As we saw before, he permitted the UWZ to carry out a broad expulsion campaign to make room for ethnic Germans from Bessarabia, which necessarily entailed allowing the RuSHA race examiners to screen the victims. As of January 1942, there were some twenty thousand of these hapless individuals languishing in UWZ holding camps.[155] By then, however, Forster had realized that the SS were stealing people right from under his nose. In the fall of 1941, he worked out the following arrangement with HSSPF Hildebrandt: a special SD department (*Sonderreferat*) regularly combed the camps and transferred anyone deemed "capable of Germanization" (including some DVL members) to a special site at Gosslershausen castle in Jabłonów, where the Eignungsprüfer picked out candidates and passed them on for a "fine selection" at the Aussenstelle. Those who remained in the camps retained the right to place an application for the Volksliste – so long as the SD consented – and the UWZ was obliged to supply the DVL offices with lists of anyone they intended to evict.[156] This division of labor functioned well enough for a time, but it also created enormous tensions. The SD complained that DVL commissioners ignored their advice; the DVL commissioners retorted that the SD often prejudiced their deliberations. They demanded that the SD hand over interned applicants for a personal evaluation; the SD refused.[157] Whereas the local RuS-Führer, Franz Vietz, reported that Forster's men registered families before their eviction, leaving him unable to recruit them for the WED, Bethge questioned whether DVL 3 members who had been relocated to Magdeburg even had any "racial value" to begin with, given the "well-known dilution of the principles of the Volksliste" in Danzig-West Prussia.[158]

The disagreements that broke out within the commissions were equally fierce – and here the Gauleiter was unwilling to compromise. SD men were certainly well-represented at each tier of the DVL administrative hierarchy, but unlike in the Warthegau, here Party functionaries routinely countermanded their opinions, and when their right of veto became an impediment, Forster moved to neutralize it.[159] In July 1942, he ordered subordinates to consider the objections of SD delegates only after they had finished

[155] USHMMA 15.021M/6/45/8: Schultz to Dongus, January 12, 1942.

[156] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/21: Forster to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, June 12, 1941; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/69: Moebes to Regierungspräsidenten in Danzig-West Prussia, November 8, 1941. Also see Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 485.

[157] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/141: Schimmel to Landräte and Oberbürgermeister Bromberg, September 28, 1942. Also see Wolf, *Ideologie*, 399-402.

[158] BA NS 47/38: Vietz to Harders, October 21, 1943; BA NS 2/88/25: Klinger, "Aktenvermerk betr. Ansatz der aus Danzig-Westpreussen stammenden Personen der Abt. 3 der DVL," November 7, 1941.

[159] USHMMA 15.168/4/NTN200/60: Moebes to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, March 18, 1942.

processing all other pending cases – in effect deferring a resolution indefinitely – unless it concerned imminent security threats or people whom the UWZ had already "evacuated."[160] With the exception of families whose farms had been earmarked for ethnic German colonization and confiscated, Forster did everything he could to protect DVL members from falling into Himmler's clutches. Hitler had entrusted him alone with "the responsibility for what occurs in the Gau," he asserted, and he threatened to "use all means at my disposal" to combat jurisdictional claims by the SS.[161] When SD agents continued to balk at the idea of privileging individuals who had belonged to Polish political parties or nationalist militias, fellow committee members claimed that most of these people had only joined such organizations under duress and deftly reminded their colleagues that the Einsatzgruppen had already executed anyone who occupied a leadership role.[162] The clashes persisted and grew more truculent. During a meeting at the DVL branch in Chojna, chaired by Forster himself, a certain SS-Rottenführer Wellnitz demurred on the first applicant brought forth by the local Kreisleiter. Forster angrily denounced his objection as "rubbish" and demanded that he retract it. When Wellnitz countered that this would violate the decree of the Interior Ministry, Forster sniped, "You are too stupid to interpret the decree," and threw him out of the room.[163]

The SS obviously could not take such effrontery lying down. Already in October 1941, Hildebrandt had complained to Himmler about Forster's "insolent and shameless" conduct, contended that he had no right to exert this level of influence over the daily workings of the DVL, and called upon the Reichsführer-SS to step in: "After all, there must be a way to stop the megalomaniacal and irresponsible actions even of a Gauleiter."[164] A year later, he wrote to Hofmann to voice his concerns that Forster had seriously compromised the "reorganization" of the annexed Polish provinces by letting scores of "racially inferior" Slavs into the "ethnic community." The resultant likelihood of sexual intercourse between Germans and Poles, one RuSHA official added, made "any management of blood policy [*Blutspolitik*] impossible."[165] Before long, conditions in West Prussia achieved a certain notoriety among the race and resettlement experts of the SS, who mockingly referred to the Gauleiter as "King Albert of Poland" and averred that his realm was only German "on paper." Bombarded with similar accounts, Himmler tried on numerous occasions to bring Forster to terms. On October 19, 1941, the two men met with Hitler, who declined to intercede and told them to resolve the dispute on their own. The following month, Himmler traveled to Danzig along with Hofmann to patch up relations between Forster and

[160] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/129: Forster to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia; USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/158: Stuntz to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, November 17, 1942.
[161] ITS 1.2.2.0.5/821554/54-57: Forster to Thierack, November 4, 1942.
[162] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 395-396.
[163] BA R 49/36a/54: Böhm, "Aktenvermerk betr. DVL Sondersitzung in Chojna ," October 21, 1941.
[164] Wolf, "Suitable Germans," 226.
[165] BA NS 2/82/214: Hildebrandt to Hofmann, September 14, 1942; BA NS 47/30/21: Ahrens to Schultz, July 31, 1944.

Hildebrandt, only to find the Gauleiter wholly unreceptive to any kind of accommodation.[166] The Reichsführer-SS would not relent. In a letter to Forster dated November 20, 1941, he challenged the argument that Germans had dominated Pomerelia since the *Völkerwanderung* of late antiquity – "I have never in all of my studies read anything about such a total German colonization" – and appealed to the putative sanctity of racism: "As a long standing National Socialist, you yourself know that even one droplet of the wrong blood that penetrates the veins of an individual can never be removed."[167] Forster's riposte was typically churlish: "If I looked like Himmler," he sneered during one conversation with Hildebrandt, "I wouldn't talk about race at all."[168]

Naturally enough, this degree of personal and institutional animosity greatly hindered attempts by the RuSHA to screen members of groups 3 and 4. During his summit with Hitler and Himmler that October, Forster promised to facilitate the work of the Eignungsprüfer, yet ten days later he reneged on this pledge and consented to examinations only in a small number of cases. Himmler was furious, but there was little he could do except assure Hildebrandt that all persons in groups 3 and 4 would undergo a rigorous inspection after the war.[169] Again and again, however, the HSSPF sent word that Forster and his minions had blocked the race examiners from performing evaluations even on the small cohort of people he had technically allowed them to assess.[170] After reading one of these reports in November 1942, Hofmann remarked sarcastically that "Albert the Great" was indeed "quite the mighty demagogue," and consoled Hildebrandt with a smug prediction that Himmler would soon "tighten the reins."[171] This never happened. In February 1943, Forster informed the DVL commissions that the findings of the RuSHA were "not to be regarded as binding for the decision on membership in the Deutsche Volksliste."[172]

By operating within the parallel structure of SS institutions spread throughout the region, RuS-Führer Vietz was sometimes able to dodge Forster's roadblocks. He at least had unfettered access to the UWZ camps, where thousands of evictees submitted applications for the Volksliste after their "displacement," if they did not belong to it already. In February 1942, the commandants of these camps received instructions to "take the racial evaluation [of the detainees] into account" before passing on recommendations to the DVL offices.[173] "In spite of the existing circumstances," Vietz wrote to Hofmann in May 1943, "there are cases which a racial investigation in connection with the DVL became necessary."[174] So, for instance, in the summer of 1942 he appraised Lieselotte von Wegner, whose "light

[166] Peter Witte et al., eds., *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/1942* (Hamburg: Christians, 1999), 240, 270. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 270-272; Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 495.
[167] BA R 43-II/1332a/84-87: Himmler to Forster, November 20, 1941.
[168] Levine, "Local Authority and the SS State," 350.
[169] Ibid., 351-352.
[170] Schenk, *Hitlers Mann*, 206, 209, 224.
[171] BA NS 2/82/131: Hofmann to Hildebrandt, November 14, 1942.
[172] Wolf, "Auf dem Weg," 43.
[173] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 451-452.
[174] BA NS 47/44: Vietz to Hofmann, May 20, 1943.

skin color, blond hair, blue eyes, and good physical appearance might initially give the impression of a Nordic" if her "broad skull" and "hooked nose" had not denoted "hereditary conditions" common among the "Oriental" and "Asiatic" races. These mixed features made perfect sense to Vietz: although Frau von Wegner's paternal ancestors had emigrated from France to the Palatinate of Zweibrücken in 1704 and served the ruling house of Wittelsbach for generations, her mother was Jewish.[175] Vietz screened 478 people for the DVL in July 1943 and eighty-one more that September, passing on the results to superiors, complete with percentages of "blood-shares" and "race-types." But these figures fell well short of the intended mark. Although there are no exact statistics on the total number of DVL members who underwent racial selection in Danzig-West Prussia, it probably did not exceed ten thousand.[176] Ultimately, Vietz could not surmount Forster's intransigence. In June 1944, he reported that "The ethnic question here is difficult. Through the false ethnic policy of Gauleiter Forster, many Poles who do not correspond to the ideal racial image of the German people have succeeded in gaining German citizenship."[177]

All of this begs the following question: if Forster was so wildly out of touch with the core tenets of Nazi ideology, as his rivals repeatedly alleged, then how was he able to get away with it? For one thing, he had allies, particularly within the network of universities and academic think tanks that furnished the Nazi regime with so much of its population planning. We have already mentioned the impact of Günther, though Forster also cultivated close ties with the Publikationsstelle in Berlin-Dahlem, an outfit that included some of the most radical Ostforscher, whom he sent copies of all DVL questionnaires to use for their ethnographic research.[178] Still, legitimation from the intellectuals on its own would never have endowed Forster with enough gravitas to withstand the Reichsführer-SS. Fortunately for him, he enjoyed the firm backing of the Interior Ministry; his outlook accorded with Stuckart's supranational conception of "kindred blood" and Frick personally observed and ratified the protocol of his DVL offices in July 1942. Far more importantly, he had the backing of the Führer. During a meeting with Hitler on May 12, 1942, Forster contended that his province housed enormous amounts of "valuable blood" left over from centuries of German rule; in some places, four-fifths of the Polish population could be Germanized without further ado, since their "appearance, behavior, and intelligence" attested to their "biological worth" and "Germanic racial constitution" (interestingly, Heydrich had

[175] BA NS 47/32: Vietz to Hofmann, August 6, 1942; BA NS 47/32: Vietz to Hofmann, August 14, 1942.

[176] See Vietz's monthly reports for July and September 1943 in BA NS 47/38. His records list 1,826 people, though these are incomplete and begin only in July 1943. Even if we extrapolate for the period before July 1943 and add in all members of Group 4, however, the overall total would still amount to only between 8,500 and 9,500 individuals.

[177] BA NS 47/54: Vietz to Harders, undated [June 1944]. It is useful to compare the situation in West Prussia with the experience of the SS in government district Zichenau, a fourth incorporated territory, as it were, annexed in 1939 to the Gau of East Prussia under Erich Koch. Here Vietz was able to screen practically everyone in groups 3 and 4 of the DVL, about 27,000 people, in the summer of 1942. Koch also gave the RuSHA full license to recruit candidates for the WED, and at least some deportees from this region were screened by the UWZ in Łódź; see USHMMA 15.105M/2/98/6: Rapp to Krumey, April 18, 1940. Also see Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 238-239; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 274.

[178] BA R 153/1042: Hofmann to Gillhoff, November 15, 1943.

argued something very similar back in January 1940). The Führer agreed and gave his old comrade leave to proceed as before. This "blank check" vested the Gauleiter with all the authority he needed.[179] As Hitler later told armaments minister Albert Speer, the main priority of Germanization policy was to absorb anyone who might possess "racially kindred blood" while barring the ingress of "racial aliens," Jews above all. One could always simply weed out other "undesirable elements" after the war.[180] Forster held an almost identical position: "whoever does not measure up or behaves poorly after admission into the DVL can be removed from the German ethnic community at any time."[181]

The desire for instant population growth, in other words, outweighed the dictates of ethnic-political security – and to some extent, the specter of biological pollution. To be sure, Forster did acknowledge the necessity of racial testing in some instances – he entrusted this task to the Racial Policy Office, which was under his control, instead of the RuSHA – but not when they undermined the prerogatives of demographic enlargement.[182] When his own colleagues began raising more and more "racial and biological objections" in the autumn of 1941, Forster commended their efforts to prevent an "influx of alien blood," yet also pointed out that, if taken too far, this compulsion would gainsay the overriding maxim of the Volksliste – "that not a single drop of German may be lost" – and "neglect the historical fact that throughout all of time large amounts of German blood have flown precisely into the territory of the current Reichsgau Danzig-West Prussia." The primary objective of racial selection, he reminded them, was to offer the possibility of integration for people who could not certify German ancestry with documents, yet were "impeccable in their external appearance and racially indistinguishable from Germans."[183] In this respect, guidelines for naturalization in Danzig-West Prussia (as opposed to just enrollment in the Volksliste) did not differ very much from the Nuremberg Laws of 1935: "Applicants who are entirely or partially descended from a foreign ethnicity… must offer further evidence that in their appearance they are counted among the races from which the German *Volk* is composed in its overwhelming majority. These races are (according to Prof. Günther) the Nordic, Dinaric, Falian, Eastern, East-Baltic, and Western races, as well as their mixtures with one another." According to this schema, "proof of racial fitness" was only required "when a racially alien blood component is suspected on the basis of phenotype." Although subjects could only become full-fledged citizens by demonstrating that they had been "completed integrated into the German essence," the emphasis here clearly lay on physiognomy.[184] The expansive scope envisioned by the Gauleiter and his underlings did not make them

[179] Henry Picker, ed., *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1976), 286-288. On Heydrich's remarks, see Koehl, *RKFDV*, 112.
[180] Helmut Schaller, *Der Nationalsozialismus und die slawische Welt* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2002), 50; Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 493-495.
[181] BA R 70/210/106-110: Forster, "Richtlinien für die weitere Arbeit der DVL," February 22, 1942.
[182] BA R 70/210/71-78: Forster, "Ausführungsbestimmungen zur Verordnung über die DVL," May 21, 1941.
[183] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN198/39: Forster to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, October 30, 1941.
[184] Ibid.

any more humanitarian or less racist, of course, and we must be careful not to adopt the SS perspective and assume that their approach fundamentally deviated from ideological beliefs just because it was not as exacting as the methodology of the RuSHA. After all, civil servants and NSDAP functionaries were also expected to be well-versed in hereditary biology and racial anthropology; when in doubt, they could always turn over borderline cases to the RPA or the public health offices.[185] But it does show that Forster's version of the DVL almost totally disregarded *völkisch* benchmarks and employed standards of race that were far more inclusive than those that held sway in the Warthegau. As a result, Danzig-West Prussia saw a far more radical application of the myth of "lost German blood."

Indeed, much Greiser, Forster justified his platform by invoking historical narratives of Germanic migration and ethnic conflict that conjured memories of the *Kulturträgertum* and the Slavic Flood. Drawing on a litany of German as well as Polish monographs, he and his advisers, Löbsack and Krannhals, published a series of articles in the spring of 1942 that once again illustrate the potency with which contemporary readings of the past animated Nazi policy-making. They alleged that Gothic warriors had populated the lands between the Oder and the Vistula rivers in the centuries following the death of Christ and had maintained their presence as the "creators of culture" ever since despite recurring invasions of "Slavic and Baltic tribes" and the "spiritual terror" of the Polish Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation. Blame for the loss of the eastern territories in 1919 rested with German industrialists and the Junkers; by treating local German peasants and workers as second-class citizens and keeping them mired in a state of material and cultural primitivity, they had opened the door for "Polish agitators." In this way, "many Germans were Polonized and lost to Germandom." When one pondered on the "fact" that "all creative acts by the various peoples of the European East are attributable to people with Nordic blood," however, then "Polish political and cultural history" revealed that "a majority of the Polish leaders of the past were of German descent." The Germans had to "learn from the past" and "in the future never empower other nations with leaders of German descent who can cause problems for the German *Volk*." Long before 1919, the Poles had "stolen" all sorts of "great German men" – from Copernicus to Chopin – whose cultural achievements they then took credit for.[186]

The key to National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* in West Prussia, as Forster described it, was the "re-acquisition of hidden Germandom," which in turn compelled the state to "fuse together and unify all these Germans," just as the Nazi movement had integrated German leftists during the 1930s. The NSDAP and its associated organs therefore introduced an array of cultural and linguistic initiatives to advance the assimilation process, but this alone would not foster the creation of a genuine "ethnic community," for

[185] Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 191; Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

[186] See the collection of essays in Wilhelm Löbsack, ed. *Die Volkstumsfrage im Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen* (Danzig: Gauschulungsamt der NSDAP, 1942).

"Whoever is familiar with the history of this land knows that ethnicity and socialism stand in a very close relationship." By raising the standard of living and promoting a strong national consciousness, the Nazis would eliminate class conflict and ensure that "the mistakes of the past" would never again endanger the preservation of Germandom in the East. The formation of an egalitarian society for all "persons of German blood" would guarantee victory in the "ethnic struggle"; this was inherent to the entire message of Nazism: "We would not be true National Socialists," Forster avowed, "if we did not have the unshakable conviction that we can succeed in molding people with German blood into enthusiastic Germans through our leadership and tutelage."[187] He was quite serious about this program of acculturation too. All adult males in Group 3 had to enroll in the paramilitary SA (*Sturmabteilung*), while women joined the NS-Frauenschaft and children became members of the Hitler Youth. Nazi functionaries kept a close eye on them as well; from time to time, they visited their workplaces and asked neighbors, coworkers, and teachers "whether the Germanizables behave like Germans."[188] Walter Wohler observed in March 1942 that the Party "worked energetically to root the people here more and more into Germandom" through numerous public lectures, exhibitions, and other "intellectual and cultural events," which "imparted German art and science to the participants" and "encouraged their inner political development." Danzig and Bydgoszcz in particular, he wrote, had been "transformed" into "vibrant centers of culture."[189] Clearly this was something much more than just "statistical Germanization."[190]

Be that as it may, Forster fared no better in his effort to establish a social utopia than Greiser did. Time after time, he whined that registration proceeded too slowly, ignoring the fact that his infernal meddling did little to speed things up and generated even more confusion among his subordinates.[191] Because the DVL branches constantly reexamined subjects they had already rejected, and because every registrant was subject to potential reclassification "on the basis of new facts," it became a procedure that could go on ad infinitum.[192] No matter how much "German blood" the Nazis brought in, it was never enough, and so the Volksliste continued to grow larger and larger. People who became members of Group 3 often found themselves in an impossible situation nonetheless. Many of their Polish compatriots denounced them as traitors. The Volksdeutsche, already enraged by their own political marginalization, likewise regarded them with suspicion and hatred and viewed both Reich German transplants as well as the Umsiedler as interlopers.[193] The morale of the resettlers from Bessarabia had sunk to rock bottom by the spring of 1942. In a village near Chojnice, one of them hanged himself "apparently because of

[187] Ibid.
[188] USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN201/44-49: "Bericht über die DVL Sondersitzung," unsigned, October 21, 1942.
[189] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157258-265: Wohler to Schlegelberger, March 10, 1942.
[190] Robert L. Koehl, "The Deutsche Volksliste in Poland, 1939-1945," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 15 (1956): 366.
[191] Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 127-128.
[192] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN197/128: Forster to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, July 2, 1942.
[193] BA NS 47/54: Vietz to Harders, undated [June 1944]. Also see Madajczyk, 487, 490.

unhappiness with the conditions here," and another two absconded from their allocated farms for the same reason.[194] From Wohler's correspondence comes the unmistakable impression that Forster's madcap ethnic policy fundamentally destabilized the entire Gau. In July 1941 and again in March 1942, he reported that the SS had "displaced" hundreds of families who belonged to Group 3, unleashing a public uproar that the fear of military conscription only exacerbated. That same month, he noted the increasingly ominous presence of anti-German wall inscriptions and warned that "hope for the restoration of a Polish state has not yet abated." In Rypin, a "secret cabal of Poles" had set fire to a cluster of government buildings; they were taken to a nearby jail and shot. In Bydgoszcz, a Polish fugitive stabbed a Gestapo officer; his comrades retaliated by lynching ten of the assailant's countrymen.[195] By July 1942, "Polish and Kashubian elements" were illegally fleeing to Germany in droves to escape reprisal killings and pervasive disorder "even though they are already Germanized."[196] The "devil's work," it seems, had turned West Prussia into hell on earth for most of the people who lived there.

When compared to Greiser's rabid ethnocentrism, Forster was radical for the uncompromising manner in which he construed and promoted concepts of race as a vessel for integration. But he was hardly alone in doing this. Although the term *Zwischenschicht* connoted segments of the population in all three of the incorporated eastern territories, in no other province did it have quite the same resonance as in Upper Silesia. Consequently, here too the Nazis instituted a program of mass Germanization. Traditionally known as a haven of tolerance, Upper Silesia was home to a polyglot amalgam of Germans, Poles, and Czechs, some Catholic, some Protestant, some Jewish, as well as smaller regional units like the Slonzaks in Cieszyn and the Silesians in Oppeln. Tensions between these groups only erupted into open conflict with the collapse of the Hohenzollern and Habsburg empires in the aftermath of the First World War, which spawned three separate Polish uprisings, a contested plebiscite, and an outright partition by the League of Nations in 1921, followed by a vicious, fratricidal civil war that lasted until 1923.[197] This history of national indifference and ethnic conflict set the stage for the Nazi occupation after the Wehrmacht marched into the eastern half of Upper Silesia in the autumn of 1939.

The man who became the de facto governor of the region, Fritz Bracht, shared much in common with his counterparts in the other annexed Polish provinces. Like Greiser, he had for years lived in the shadow of an overbearing superior – in this case, Josef Wagner, the Gauleiter of (western) Silesia – and subtly exploited Himmler's patronage to undermine him. Like Forster, he presumed that the majority of his new subjects were "German-blooded" and would brook no rival to supreme authority over ethnic

[194] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157266-72: Wohler to Schlegelberger, May 30, 1942.

[195] ITS 1.2.7.10.4/82191487-490: Wohler to Schlegelberger, July 10, 1941; ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157258-265: Wohler to Schlegelberger, March 10, 1942.

[196] BA R 70/93/36: Willich to Hildebrandt, July 23, 1942.

[197] James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 14, 236, 247; Andrew Demshuk *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 45-46.

policy within his Gau.[198] But Bracht was also something of an understated figure; while his Germanization plans were no less ambitious or ruthless, he eschewed the bombastic displays of personal power that Greiser and Forster relished and shrewdly sought to minimize conflict with the SS whenever practicable. Although just as eager to effect the "total eradication of all alien elements" in Upper Silesia, he assumed that such individuals made up only a tiny fragment of the overall population. Given that nearly all of the inhabitants (or at least their forefathers) had once been citizens of the German or Austrian empires, he reasoned, one needed only "to strengthen the consciousness of their belonging to the German nation in the coming years and, insofar as it has been submerged, to re-awaken it."[199]

Hence, the initial classificatory framework Bracht outlined was relatively straightforward: the offices of the civil administration and the NSDAP first handed out nationality certificates to "proven" Volksdeutsche and then began accepting citizenship applications from "Polonized persons of German descent" in those areas that fell within the old borders of the Kaiserreich.[200] This meant that in Upper Silesia, far more than elsewhere, it was civilians who initiated naturalization proceedings, not the state. As one census-taker explained in December 1939, "ethnic identity is primarily dependent on the declaration given by the individual."[201] This system did not change very much after the Interior Ministry introduced its guidelines for the implementation of the DVL in the spring of 1941. In April of that year, Bracht made a public announcement in which he called upon all Upper Silesians (excepting Jews and "Gypsies") to come forward and sue for recognition as fellow "ethnic comrades." In May, he issued a decree affirming the "general principle" that "if German blood is present, it must be retained for Germandom."[202] That same month, the DVL offices in Upper Silesia started working at a breakneck pace.

It is possible to reconstruct what the registration process was like on the ground in this region due to the surviving records of one Oskar Geigle, a young SD delegate assigned to the DVL branch in Katowice (the provincial capital). After a detailed briefing from the Landrat on June 13, 1941, Geigle began to receive a steady stream of directives across his desk: on the protocol for issuing identity cards and handling appeals, on how to deal with ethnically mixed marriages, on the repatriation and compensation of ethnic Germans whom the SS had "evacuated by mistake," on the enrollment of spies

[198] Initially, the Germans annexed the recently conquered zones to the existing Gau of Silesia under Wagner. Only a year later did Upper Silesia become a separate administrative entity, with Bracht ruling as the Gauleiter and Provincial President (*Oberpräsident*) of government districts Kattowitz and Oppeln; see Steinbacher, *Musterstadt*, 124.

[199] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 387-388.

[200] Stefanski, "Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik," 46.

[201] Quoted from Gerhard Wolf, "Exporting Volksgemeinschaft: The Deutsche Volksliste in Annexed Upper Silesia," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives*, eds. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 135.

[202] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/23-26: Bracht, "Material für die Arbeiten zur Aufstellung und Durchführung der Deutschen Volksliste," May 25, 1941.

and police informants (so long as their "public Polish disguise" was just that).[203] These instructions all dealt with the inclusive side of the procedure. Yet no matter how wide the Nazis cast the net, there were always people left on the outside looking in. Geigle learned that commissioners in the old Duchy of Pless (Pszczyna) were struck by "how stark the differences were between farmers of the same villages," where "a considerable portion of the farmers had to be rejected as Poles" in order to "free up agricultural land for Germans."[204] These reactions speak to the sense of bewilderment many Nazi officials experienced as they tried to sort out the puzzling ethnographic conditions of the eastern frontier.[205] The problem, common to the Warthegau and West Prussia as well, was especially acute in East Upper Silesia, where there were far more people whom historians have dubbed "amphibians" – bilingual inhabitants of the Central European borderlands who could switch their national affiliation seemingly at will. The Upper Silesians were a motley crew indeed, whose nuanced and complex identities belied neat overlaps between language, culture, religion, and political orientation.[206]

With little else to go by, Nazi administrators in Upper Silesia operated according to a geographical logic rooted in the political and demographic history of the region. Bracht's deputy, Hans Karl Faust, suggested in October 1941 that the commissions should concentrate on ten to twelve counties within the districts Germany and Austria had ceded to Poland in 1919, where he estimated that nearly all of the 1.8 million indigenes would be eligible for the DVL, even if two-thirds of them would probably wind up in Group 3. The westernmost part of Upper Silesia (Government District Oppeln) required minimal attention since it had never been separated from the Reich and most residents were already German citizens, though here too some sixty-seven thousand Polish-speakers joined groups 3 and 4.[207] The formerly Russian zones of the Gau were another matter altogether. In Galicia, the easternmost section of the province, Nazi officials saw little more than a mass of around four hundred thousand Polish "migrants" who "by their very existence encumber the ethnic struggle."[208] Faust reported that the DVL branch in Zawiercie, for instance, had closed up shop after processing a mere six hundred cases; the committee members judged the rest of the 120,000 denizens to be "unfit for Germanization."[209] As of March 1943, Bracht's subordinates had accepted only 2 percent of the population in Russian Galicia as a

[203] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/15: Landrat Kattowitz to Geigle, June 9, 1941; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/27: Mildner to Geigle, August 4, 1941; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/18-20: Springorum to Geigle, July 25, 1940; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/36: Greifelt to Arlt, April 25, 1941; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/16-17: Mildner to Geigle, July 22, 1941.

[204] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/28-29: Mildner to Geigle, August 4, 1941.

[205] See Matthias Lempart, "Zur Problematik der Deutschen Volksliste in Oberschlesien in den Jahren des Zweiten Weltkrieges," *Via Silesia* (1999): 119-128.

[206] Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole*, 247-250.

[207] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 469.

[208] Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 160.

[209] BA R 49/467: "Übersicht des Oberpräsidiums über den Stand der DVL," unsigned, January 8, 1942.

whole, about eighteen thousand people.[210] It was precisely here, therefore, that Himmler staked out large areas for the settlement of ethnic Germans, who would be organized in chain of agricultural communes anchored around the town of Auschwitz (Oświęcim).[211] Outside of this "eastern strip," however, DVL commissioners scarcely turned away anyone. By January 1942, they had registered 238,921 people, and even that was not enough to sate the Gauleiter. Having come to realize the effectiveness of official coercion, in February 1942 Bracht made a proclamation that inhabitants who did not file an application by March 31 would be excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* forever, and his subordinates covertly spread rumors that noncompliance would lead to internment in a concentration camp. Over the next three months, the numbers jumped rapidly; in some parts of the Gau, 80 to 90 percent of the residents who remained outside the fold chose to sign up.[212] By January 1943, the number of DVL members in Upper Silesia had risen to over one million, with 754,414 in Group 3 alone.[213] Despite these gigantic figures, there is no evidence that Himmler ever criticized Bracht's tactics.

The only real issue over which the Gauleiter and the Reichsführer-SS strongly disagreed was the same one that pitted the SS against the Nazi party in the other incorporated eastern territories: racial classification. Sometime in the late fall of 1940, Arlt met with Hofmann, Fähndrich, and Schwalm to discuss the screening of the Slonzaks. They also invited the Ostforscher and Breslau professor Dr. Walter Kuhn. Arlt asserted that "a close biological connection" linked the Slonzaks to the Germans, as the resemblance between their agricultural techniques and village architecture supposedly indicated. Kuhn presented an "historical overview" along with "cartographic charts" to confirm the accuracy of these arguments and added that about half of the population living in the area had already possessed "Germanic blood" when settlers from Löwenberg arrived in the thirteenth century. The participants concluded on the basis of these "historical facts" that the "biological substance" of the Slonzaks was about 50 percent German and jointly recommended to Greifelt that a "selection operation" should begin in February 1941.[214] In a letter to Bracht dated March 27, 1941, Greifelt highlighted the danger of recognizing "too many Water Poles [*Wasserpolen*] and Slonzaks as Germans" and advised a "strict method" for vetting them.[215] He did not mention the RuSHA, but Bracht must have understood the implication of these words, for he promised the RuS-Führer in Upper Silesia, Walter Scholtz, that evaluations of entrants in Group 3

[210] BA R 49/467: "Übersicht des RKF-Stabshauptamtes über die DVL in den annektierten westlichen polnischen Gebieten," sig. illegible, March 31, 1942.

[211] Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 1996), 181; Steinbacher, *Musterstadt*, 159-160.

[212] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/158-161: Bracht, "Durchführungsverordnung zur Vereinfachung des Volkslistenverfahrens in Oberschlesien," February 14, 1942; Stefanski, "Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik," 52; Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 130.

[213] See the statistical overviews of the RKF Staff Main Office for these months in BA R 49/467.

[214] BA NS 2/61/69: Meyer-Hetling to Arlt, Schwalm, and Kuhn, December 15, 1940.

[215] ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82343088: Greifelt to Bracht, March 27, 1941.

would begin in the near future.[216] This was dissimulation; the Gauleiter had no intention of opening up the rolls of the DVL to the Eignungsprüfer. Although he stipulated that "racial principles" were "decisive" for the acceptance of families from the *Zwischenschicht*, he asked the NSDAP Kreisleiter to get in touch with the Racial Policy Office in such instances, not the RuSHA (like Forster, he wanted to keep the process in the hands of a Party agency under his control).[217] In all other cases, however, he maintained that "the registration of individuals who belong to the German people cannot in principle be made dependent on the results of racial screening."[218] After hearing of Bracht's procrastination, Hofmann wrote to the Gauleiter on November 19, demanding that he allow Scholtz to begin his work at once: "You are no doubt in possession of Ordinance 50/I of September 30, 1941. In this ordinance, the Reichsführer-SS delegates the Race and Settlement Main Office with the racial examination of cases for Group 3."[219] Bracht stonewalled until Hofmann showed up at his office in Katowice on December 10; when this impromptu meeting also failed to yield a turnaround, Hofmann appealed to Himmler.[220]

This time, however, the race and resettlement experts found their leader surprisingly noncommittal. During a conference with Greifelt, Hofmann, Ehlich, and Arlt on February 9-10, 1942, Himmler ordained that racial examinations of Group 3 members should only take place in Upper Silesia if the person came into question for an early release from the ten-year probation period; the remainder could be waived until after the "final victory." Unbeknownst to any of these men, Bracht had beaten them to the punch, having already brokered this deal with Himmler a week earlier.[221] Seemingly unaware of the new policy line, Schultz wrote to Bracht on February 23 to insist on the immediate "sifting" of everyone in Group 3, with the sole exception of military recruits.[222] RuS-Führer Scholtz continued to badger the Gauleiter as well.[223] By that point, Bracht was just about fed up with the RuSHA. In early March, he fired off an angry letter to Hofmann, reminding him of who bore responsibility for the DVL in Upper Silesia, berating the "fanaticism" of his underlings, and declaring that he would no longer respond to any correspondence on the matter. He was certainly not going to begin prematurely with naturalization proceedings for almost a million people with suspect ethnic-political loyalties (at best) just because the race examiners wanted to live out their fantasy of creating a "comprehensive racial inventory."[224]

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[216] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 272.

[217] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/23-26: Bracht, "Material für die Arbeiten zur Aufstellung und Durchführung der Deutschen Volksliste," May 25, 1941.

[218] Wolf, "Exporting Volksgemeinschaft," 142.

[219] BA NS 2/83/85-86: Hofmann to Bracht, November 19, 1941.

[220] BA NS 2/83/82-83: Hofmann to Bracht, December 1, 1941; BA NS 2/58/191: Hofmann to Himmler, February 6, 1942.

[221] BA NS 2/80/65-66: Bracht to Hofmann, March 1, 1942; Witte, *Dienstkalender*, 333, 341-342.

[222] BA NS 2/80/67-68: Schultz to Bracht, February 23, 1942.

[223] BA NS 2/80/51-53: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung bei Gauleiter Bracht," March 24, 1942.

[224] BA NS 2/80/65-66: Bracht to Hofmann, March 1, 1942.

Beyond preserving his own personal authority over ethnic policy, Bracht had several good reasons to resist the machinations of the SS so forcefully. From an administrative, political, and economic perspective, he worried that racial examinations would not only drain precious human and material resources, but spawn unrest and endanger industrial production – an unacceptable hazard in light of how important the region's factories and mines were to the war effort.[225] There were also ideological and procedural motive: the Gauleiter and his ministers were highly critical of the race examiners' reliance on physiognomy. Bracht went so far as to order specifically that "anthropological skull measurements and comparisons to a color chart should not be decisive."[226] That is not to say that he and his circle discounted notions of race or put much stock in conventional ethno-cultural criteria like language either. As one memorandum from the Gau leadership put it, "The Jew also speaks German, yet is not a German." Nazi administrators in Upper Silesia placed greater weight on a subject's "overall personality," their "subjective attitude," and their "general lifestyle and life achievements." The same memorandum acknowledged that "an ethnic member must bear the racial characteristics of their nation," but "because these racial characteristics are not externally discernible, one can only detect them through a person's intellect and demeanor."[227] Like Forster, Bracht simply assumed that state and Party functionaries were qualified to make such determinations.

Yet there was a third factor at play here too: the myth of "lost German blood." Bracht believed that members of Group 3 could forego racial screening until the time of their final naturalization because most of them stemmed from German ancestors.[228] When Arlt suggested in the fall of 1941 "that the people of Upper Silesia should be regarded as a mixed population," Bracht swiftly reprimanded him: "Given that I myself have never said such a thing, it should be understood that this statement is totally nonsensical."[229] The Gauleiter would not condemn the majority of his "German" subjects to the harsh standards of the SS, for in his mind that would refute the mandate of the DVL: to leave behind "not a single drop of German blood." To Bracht and his associates, even "participation in a political organization of a foreign state" was "naturally in no way a reliable benchmark, because these people were part of the floating ethnic substance during their tenure under a foreign state." In November 1942, the Gauleiter proclaimed that even "active participation in the three Polish uprisings" should not lead to repudiation for someone of German ancestry, because it usually only meant that they had "slid over into the Polish camp." The Volksliste would encompass all those natives who had suffered a "fluctuation into Polishness" due to the "defects" of preceding German regimes who had failed to treat them as true

[225] BA NS 2/80/51-53: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung bei Gauleiter Bracht," March 24, 1942.
[226] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/23-26: Bracht, "Material für die Arbeiten zur Aufstellung und Durchführung der Deutschen Volksliste," May 25, 1941.
[227] Quoted from Wolf, *Ideologie*, 457.
[228] Stefanski, "Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik," 51-52.
[229] USHMMA 15.007/9/113/37: Bracht to Springorum, September 3, 1941.

partners in the "ethnic community." In East Upper Silesia, as in the other incorporated eastern territories, the "hunt for good blood" overshadowed security concerns precisely because it seemed to be the only way to rectify the "mistakes of the past" and reverse the "damages inflicted by earlier state measures."[230]

The Eignungsprüfer stationed there definitely did not remain idle, however. While limiting their ability to inspect members of Group 3, Bracht bestowed them with full access to the roughly fifty thousand inhabitants categorized in Group 4 as well as an estimated 150,000 "ethnic aliens" who would be "freed up in the course of resettlement" or "suggested for Germanization by the Kreis leadership and the Landräte."[231] He probably first worked out this compromise with Himmler during their time together in early February 1942, when the latter was preparing for the transfer of all "renegades" to Germany. He extended the same offer to Bruno Schultz on March 1 and reached an accommodation with Hofmann at a meeting in Katowice on March 24. The RuSHA chief then met with Scholtz a week later to hash out the details.[232] The available evidence does not disclose when examinations of DVL members began or exactly how many people they covered. Faust later recalled that the race examiners definitely began working at the DVL branch in Katowice, yet gave no indication of the timing or numbers involved.[233]

Their activity was extensive enough to stimulate fresh conflicts, however, for Bracht's arrangement with the SS quickly ran aground. The Landräte in Cieszyn and Żywiec complained that racial selection undermined the authority of state agencies and triggered discontent among the populace. The government president of Katowice, Walther Springorum, bluntly told the RuSHA leadership that the verdicts of the Eignungsprüfer would only serve as an advisory opinion, not a definitive judgment. As he saw it, there was no reason to reject someone "solely because a racial evaluation yields the grade RuS-IV."[234] During a conference with DVL administrators in January 1943, Bruno K. Schultz retaliated by defending his typology as the only framework that accorded with scientific principles; it was the "individual external features" of a given person that exposed their "inner disposition" as well as the "imbalances" typical of "floating ethnicity." The Eignungsprüfer tried their very best to get around the obstacles thrown up by Bracht's men and opted for a more proactive approach by advocating the reclassification of families deemed especially "racially valuable" from Group 4 to Group 3, which led to yet more jurisdictional squabbles. By 1943, cooperation between the RuSHA and many DVL offices seems to have broken down almost entirely, prompting the Gauleiter to formulate a different procedure. He reiterated that "the admission of people of German ethnicity into the DVL cannot be made fundamentally dependent on the result of a racial examination," though he also conceded that "There are cases in which a correct decision for the Volksliste can in fact be derived from the positive result of a

[230] Quoted from Wolf, *Ideologie*, 458.
[231] BA NS 2/80/68-70: Bracht to Schultz, March 1, 1942.
[232] BA NS 2/80/51-53: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung bei Gauleiter Bracht," March 24, 1942.
[233] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 274.
[234] Wolf, "Exporting Volksgemeinschaft," 142.

racial examination… when German ancestry cannot be clearly determined through evidence of descent or through subjective confession." If the DVL offices possessed "no other convincing characteristics for a decision," he stated, "the RuS commissions must be active and the decision of the DVL must conform to their findings."[235] In an attempt to reconcile Himmler's aims with his own, Bracht essentially fell back on the guidelines for racial assessments Stuckart had outlined back in March 1941.

This new arrangement failed to appease either side, but it was the DVL commissioners who eventually came out on top, for only they could decide whether or not an applicant's heritage was "questionable." Bracht had once again cleverly outmaneuvered the Eignungsprüfer. When the examinations resumed in March 1943, so did the conflicts. RuSHA functionaries continued to pressure local administrators to upgrade people with higher racial ratings, and Bracht's underlings continued to snub these recommendations. The government president in Oppeln wrote in June 1943 that "A good result from the racial examination in no way justifies a better classification of the applicant, just as purely Polish ethnic members cannot be accepted into the DVL with a good grade from the RuS procedure unless special circumstances allow for this." He and his colleagues were equally reluctant to excise people from the Volksliste just because the Eignungsprüfer branded them "racially inferior." The Landrat in Świętochlowice-Tarogórski, Walrab von Wangenheim, reported on August 16, 1943 that he had simply ignored objections raised by the RuSHA against 312 individuals in Group 4. Even the SD could not persuade him to take these rulings seriously.[236] There is no evidence that Bracht ever terminated the practice of racial evaluations within the DVL, but it is clear who had gained the upper hand.

The SS had little better luck with the resettlement of DVL members. Fähndrich had met with Party delegates in East Upper Silesia as early as April 1941 to discuss transporting "renegades" to Germany; the following month, Bracht himself petitioned the agencies of the RKF to remove them as soon as feasible, with the multitudes in Group 3 to follow shortly thereafter.[237] Greifelt also traveled to Katowice sometime in the summer of 1941 to confer with Bracht's ministers on this topic.[238] In the end, however, these plans went nowhere. Arlt admitted in September that "in contrast to the other Gaue, a resettlement of members of Group 3 is not intended for Upper Silesia" (presumably because of logistical and economic complications).[239] Like Greiser, however, Bracht never abandoned the conviction that sending everyone in Group 3 and Group 4 to the Reich for Germanization was the proper course of action. In a letter written to Bormann in October 1942, he ruminated on the deportation of no less than 1.3 million DVL members to the interior of Germany and their replacement with an equivalent number of

[235] Wolf, *Ideologie*, 441-444.
[236] Ibid., 445.
[237] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 464, 500.
[238] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 752-753.
[239] BA NS 49/3113/1-4: Aschmonait, "Vermerk über die RKF Abteilungsleiter-Besprechung," September 14, 1941.

ethnic German Umsiedler from Eastern Europe.[240] All of this is to say that, despite his mistrust of physiognomic criteria, Bracht's motivations and goals did not differ substantively from those of Himmler and his circle of experts within the RKFDV.

Indeed, for all the Gauleiter did to prevent the RuSHA from interfering in the DVL, he lent unambiguous sponsorship to the Re-Germanization Procedure. After all, there were tens of thousands of "displaced" Poles awaiting dispatch in transit camps throughout East Upper Silesia, and many of them would be slated for labor deployment in the Reich anyway.[241] As we saw above, the UWZ began taking in re-Germanizables from the province in September 1940, and in March 1942 Bracht broadened the field of potential candidates to approximately 150,000 people. He went above and beyond that by establishing a formal recruitment structure. Four days after Bracht pitched these schemes to Bruno Schultz on March 1, RuS-Führer Scholtz drafted a memorandum entitled Guidelines for the Germanization of Polish Families. Drawing attention to the political danger of permitting "bearers of Nordic blood" to infuse the Polish resistance movement with leadership qualities, Scholtz identified the following solution: "the racially valuable clans of *Polentum* should be skimmed (*abgeschöpft*)… in order to return these Germanic blood-carriers to the German body politic." He therefore enjoined the "laymen" of the Party, the civil service, and the police to report any prospects residing in their districts.[242] In a directive dated June 9, 1942, Faust clarified that "in addition to the return of members of Group 3 of the DVL to the German *Volksgemeinschaft*, biologically valuable families of Polish ethnicity who are capable and worthy of Germanization are also being registered in Upper Silesia… The Germanization of these families will take place in the Old Reich." A special commission of the RuSHA would now travel from county to county and pick out whomever they liked from among this fresh source of potential acquisitions. Faust instructed local mayors and Landräte alike to enact a "rough registration" of their constituents beforehand, particularly those whom the DVL offices had previously rebuffed, "in order to obtain an overview on the number of potentially suitable families."[243] In the late summer of 1942, the UWZ commandos were integrated into this framework as well when Bracht launched renewed "displacement" actions in the "eastern strip" so as to procure more farmland for ethnic German resettlers. In the course of these evictions, SS functionaries collected anyone whom local Party and administrative officials had suggested for re-Germanization in a separate camp in Racibórz to await further screening by the RuSHA.[244] Although we know that the SS "displaced" over sixty thousand people in this region between March 1941 and January 1943, existing source material unfortunately does not disclose exactly how many of them

[240] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 500-501.
[241] Stefanski, "Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik," 54.
[242] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/188-189: Scholtz, "Richtlinien zur Eindeutschung polnischer Familien," March 5, 1942.
[243] BA R 186/11: Faust to Gauämter in Upper Silesia, June 9, 1942.
[244] BA R 186/11: Böckmann to Gauämter in Upper Silesia, August 12, 1942; BA R 186/11: Arlt to Gauämter in Upper Silesia, September 8, 1942.

became re-Germanizables. Long before 1943, however, it had become largely irrelevant whether they went to Germany or stayed in East Upper Silesia, for in the spring of 1942 the Gauleiter inaugurated his own assimilation program, one which, like Forster's, bore a strong resemblance to the WED.[245]

Coming on the heels of his negotiations with the RKF and the RuSHA, on April 17, 1942 Bracht published Ordinance A/71 on "re-Germanization measures" for Upper Silesians in Group 3 of the DVL. The document began by announcing the basic premise that "Re-Germanization work is the most essential work to be carried out by the movement" and placing ultimate responsibility for this task with the agencies and organizations of the NSDAP. The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, the NS-Frauenschaft and "Strength Through Joy" leisure organization, the German Labor Front and the NSV, even the National Socialist Motor Corps and Flyers Corps, all were called upon to take an active role in what amounted to a cradle-to-grave system of state surveillance and political indoctrination. The SS had a crucial role to play as well: the Party leadership in every county formed special working groups made up of consultants from each of these various institutions, and they generally took their cues from Fritz Arlt, who orchestrated the project as Bracht's "plenipotentiary for re-Germanization measures." Under Arlt's guidance, the agencies of the NSDAP sought not only to ensure that subjects were proficient in the German language, but to familiarize them with the customs, geography, and history of their village or town by holding "ethnic-educational courses" and integrating them into a "family- and community-oriented culture" through songs, legends, folk tales, theater, films, and trips to the local library. They also supervised the multifaceted "social and economic policy side" of re-Germanization: a "solution to the conflict between industry and agriculture," an "elevation from the social disasters resulting from a racially alien social order," the "building up of an orderly German workforce and an orderly peasantry" through the "regulation and normalization of income conditions," the "fully planned deployment of craftsmen, business people, and so forth in regard to future profitability," and the "creation of possibilities for promotion and mobility." To underscore the importance of these various projects and enable him to "track their overall progress," Bracht expected the Kreisleiter to submit bimonthly updates on the "pursuit of re-Germanization measures" and the "psychological experiences" of those who participated in them. Lest anyone forget the historical novelty of this model, the Gauleiter stressed that "These measures cannot be designated as Germanization. The concept of Germanization must disappear in general. The concept of re-Germanization must take its place, so that we can resist from the outset all political and intellectual attacks asserting that this is a matter of Germanizing alien races."[246]

Much like Greiser and Forster, therefore, Bracht saw the Volksliste not only as a demographic strategy to "recover" persons of "lost German blood," but as a revolutionary instrument of socio-

[245] Zygmunt Izdebski, *Niemiecka Lista Narodowa na Górnym Śląsku* (Katowice: Instytut Śląsku, 1946), 10-15.
[246] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/221-226: Bracht, "Anordnung A 71," April 17, 1942; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/227: Hoffmann, "Anordnung A 72," April 15, 1942.

economic leveling and cultural homogenization. As in the Warthegau and Danzig-West Prussia, however, Nazi Germanization policy in East Upper Silesia had the exact opposite outcome. If the DVL was meant to appease the local population and ensure political stability, it failed miserably. Bracht's policies infuriated Volksdeutsche in groups 1 and 2, who once again grumbled that "anti-German elements" were not being treated harshly enough. The painful awareness of second-class status among members of Group 3, as Bracht's advisers discerned in the autumn of 1942, had also "shattered the authority of the NSDAP as well as the trust of the Upper Silesians in the measures of Party and state." Although Bracht wrote off claims that these people were "treated differently than other Germans" as "nonsensical rumors," the realities of hierarchy and fragmentation were unmistakable to more attentive officials, who recognized that their efforts, like those of their forebears in the decades before the First World War, had pushed many people into the arms of the Polish national movement.[247] More than a few brave individuals openly declined the opportunity to enlist in the DVL, so many that the Nazis had to draw up a special affidavit that read "I voluntarily revoke my application for admission into the Deutsche Volksliste because I am a Pole and want to remain one."[248] Here as elsewhere, echoes of Prussian *Polenpolitik* almost certainly aroused a newfound patriotic fervor among many as well, especially the youth.[249] The prospect of being conscripted by the Wehrmacht and used as "cannon-fodder in the East" likewise discouraged men of military age from identifying themselves as "persons of German blood," and Germany's increasingly tenuous military position from late 1942 onward undoubtedly strengthened this will to resist.[250] The situation in Upper Silesia had deteriorated to such an extent that in 1943 Springorum warned of an impending insurrection led by underground Polish resistance cells.[251] While many Nazi functionaries followed Bracht in fabricating a deceptive image of political calm, their numerous supplementary instructions convey the profound uncertainty that abounded within government circles.[252] Popular opposition, of course, also critically endangered economic production for the war effort. As one commentator remarked, "The past has taught us nothing… The DVL is the tragedy of the Upper Silesian. However, it is also the tragedy of the administration that it has been condemned to waste its energy and its prestige on an undertaking that contributes nothing to final victory, and instead complicates the achievement of war-essential tasks in Gau Upper Silesia."[253]

At the same time, the fact that expressions of dissent across western Poland only gradually took on a distinctly nationalist, anti-German flavor indicates that many people were initially willing to play

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[247] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 506-508; Wolf, *Ideologie*, 411-412, 456-457.
[248] See USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN196/5.
[249] Koehl, *RKFDV*, 140.
[250] BA R 75/7/39: Harders, "Zusätzliche Bericht über die Probeerfassung im Kreis Wollstein," July 3, 1942.
[251] Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, eds. *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager Band 5: Hinzert, Auschwitz, Neuengamme* (Munich: Beck, 2007), 154.
[252] Stefanski, "Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik," 51-52.
[253] Quoted from Wolf, *Ideologie*, 456.

ball so long as they felt the Nazi regime looked out for their interests and treated them as fellow citizens Indeed, while some inhabitants refused to play ball no matter what, others embraced the chance to become "German." More than a few did so enthusiastically, either because they saw themselves as such already or simply picked the side they presumed would be victorious. There was always a disturbing shade of truth to Forster's otherwise disingenuous adage that "all Germanization work depends on the principle of willingness."[254] For most, however, the prospect of economic disenfranchisement proved to be more than sufficient to overwhelm any internal qualms. According to Walter Wohler, it was "symptomatic" for people to sign the Volksliste purely as a means of holding onto their property or having it restored. He listed access to better rations, working conditions, and other benefits of racial privilege as an equally commonplace incentive to volunteer.[255] Of course, in an environment where adhering to one's native identity carried the risk of forced labor, homelessness, poverty, and incarceration, where the only alternative to submission lay in actively defying the invaders, many civilians chose membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft* because it seemed like the only reliable armor with which to protect themselves, an "act of desperation committed by people who were completely terrified."[256]

The Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci has left us with a compelling theoretical device that ties together these various mindsets and motives. In exploring the dynamics of police authority, Gramsci distinguished between "dominance," which is underwritten by the threat or use of violence, and "hegemony," which refers to the "voluntary internalization" by the oppressed of the rules established by the oppressor. According to Gramsci, "hegemony" creates a space in which the subaltern can articulate "active and direct consent" through a "forced choice" that emphasizes their relative impotence vis-à-vis the state yet also provides considerable room for maneuver.[257] This is a remarkably accurate description of how Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* both ensnared and empowered (non-Jewish) indigenes in the incorporated eastern territories, not to mention WED candidates in Germany. In each case, would-be "ethnic comrades" were induced primarily through coercion to engage with the National Socialist regime via acts of "calculative involvement" and "normative commitment" as opposed to outright collaboration.[258] Though ordinary people were caught between a rock and a hard place, they were not entirely passive victims. As James E. Bjork has recently argued, "exposure to alternating Germanizing and Polonizing forces cannot be seen only as a process of cumulative disempowerment… Nationalist competition also

[254] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 876. For the quote, see BA R 49/76/1-22: Forster, "Anordnung zur Durchführung der Eindeutschungsaktion," December 14, 1940.

[255] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157/258-265: Wohler to Schlegelberger, March 10, 1942.

[256] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 490-491.

[257] Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks*, trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.

[258] Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 199.

provided opportunities for serial adaptation and accommodation."[259] The inchoate nature of the criteria around which classification revolved did not just permit an excessive amount of leeway for DVL commissioners; it led them to shift the basis of their decisions away from official standards and toward popular affirmations of race and *Volk*. Yet while the elasticity of ethnic and racial categories invited "opportunism and manipulation of the system by aspiring Volksdeutsche," in the words of Doris Bergen, it also "made them vulnerable to reclassification and brutalization" – a Catch-22 scenario that "contributed both to the insecurity of the people defined as ethnic Germans and to the vulnerability of those designated outside that privileged group."[260] In this sense, the Nazis' ongoing campaign of terror and persecution turned out to be a double-edged sword, for once registrants learned that acquiescence did not necessarily shield them from the depredations suffered by Poles, they had little cause to remain loyal or even neutral. No matter how many people the Nazis absorbed, the net effect of both collaboration and resistance was to confuse and complicate notions of racial and ethnic belonging, making it virtually impossible to delineate between allies and enemies.

In explaining the implementation of the Deutsche Volksliste, we obviously cannot ignore the impact of economic, military, and administrative constraints. But these were not the primary motivating factors behind the inception and development of the system itself. The increasingly chaotic realities of daily life in western Poland refute the supposition that Nazi policy-making conformed to the "pragmatic" or utilitarian logic we might expect from a modern, achievement-oriented state. The Germanization measures pushed through by Greiser, Forster, and Bracht did not hasten the return of productive social, economic, or political relationships. Nor was the DVL a tolerant or generous institution that advanced the well-being of the citizenry. For one thing, the Nazis left some 4.2 million people out of it, effectively relegating them to enslavement, starvation, and arbitrary violence. For another, admission into the DVL did not mean the obtainment of full civil rights; many people in Group 3 fared little better than Polish "protected members," and those in Group 4 were often treated even worse. In short, we may only speak of a "de-radicalization" of Nazi *Volkstumspolitk* in Poland if construed solely in terms of deportation to the General Government – as if the staggering death toll of Polish civilians during the Second World War were not enough to disprove such an argument.

Curiously enough, when viewed alongside the myths and fantasies that animated them, the different taxonomies that emerged in the incorporated eastern territories suggest that biological concepts of race – so long as they did not pertain to Jews, Gypsies, or non-whites – were actually far more inclusive than cultural touchstones of ethnicity. In the Warthegau, the *völkisch* criteria favored by

[259] Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole*, 271-272.

[260] Doris Bergen, "The 'Volksdeutschen' of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust: Constructed Ethnicity, Real Genocide," in *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identities and Cultural Differences*, eds. Keith Bullivant, Geoffrey Giles, and Walter Pape (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999), 70-71.

provincial administrators and security operatives sometimes guaranteed integration, but usually kept supplicants out of the DVL, forcing Himmler and the SS leadership into the awkward position of having to push for a more broad-minded racial-anthropological format (with only moderate success). In West Prussia and Upper Silesia, on the other hand, they engaged in a futile struggle to contain an even more expansive usage of this paradigm by demanding a stricter application of ethnic and racial exclusivity. Thus, in each of these three provinces, the Nazis singularly failed to balance or triangulate the competing aims of demographic rejuvenation, ethnic homogeneity, and political security. Yet for all their maneuvering and mutual distrust, each of the key players defended their actions by appealing to the same historical discourse and political rhetoric. It would be easy to dismiss their admittedly programmatic statements as mere ideological window-dressing if they were not so firmly anchored in the symbolic repertoire of German culture and did not hew so closely to everyday practices on the ground. Although Himmler and the Gauleiter fought over many things, they all agreed on the obligation to locate "bearers of lost German blood" and "win them over" through a comprehensive platform of assimilation that imitated the Re-Germanization Procedure on a much grander scale. The DVL therefore exemplifies how National Socialism, to quote Kate Brown, "worked in a colonial pattern as a formula to replace the localized identities and cultural complexities that made governance so difficult in the borderlands."[261] It was a colossal attempt to render foreign populations "legible" and cut through the ambiguities of ethnic affiliation, and while the SS certainly influenced this process, in the end the Gauleiter won the contest for control over Germanization policy in western Poland.[262] For Himmler and his acolytes, however, there was at least consolation to be found elsewhere, because in the meantime the SS had charted new lands in which to hunt for "good blood" – not farther east, but to the west.

[261] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 11.

[262] On the concept of "legibility" as a fixation of modern state bureaucracies, see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

Chapter Six: Lost Blood in the West

"If they want to Germanize us, then why would they deport us?"

–Alojz-Slavko Kunej

"You are German whether you want to be or not. You are German whether you know it or not."

–Hermann Bickler

In the spring of 1941, Anton Kerzan embarked on a whirlwind journey that would take him to nearly every corner of the Greater German Reich and introduce him to citizens of virtually every country under Nazi domination. All along the way, he would witness the collapse of distinctions between the home front and the imperial periphery, and the erosion of ethnic boundaries that came with it. In May of that year, the SS had evicted Anton and his family from their home in Cundrovec, a small town lying just north of the Sava River in northwest Yugoslavia (present-day Slovenia), and sent them to an assembly camp in Brestanica twelve miles to the northwest. At some point during their stay, the Kerzans underwent a racial examination conducted by an Eignungsprüfer from the RuSHA. Having been declared "capable of re-Germanization," they left Brestanica on October 20, traveling over the Karawank mountains to their next destination in Klagenfurt, Austria. After passing through several more transit camps, in early 1942 they arrived at a resettlement center, the Umsiedlungslager Chausseehaus, situated near the Hessian capitol of Wiesbaden. Here the Kerzans and their compatriots mingled with deportees from France and Luxembourg; the Nazis had "reclaimed" these people for the *Volk* too. No matter where they came from, inmates of the Chausseehaus were subjected to a battery of compulsory educational measures designed to convert them into Germans. Yet in 1943, Anton and his family were on the move again, this time to the Umsiedlungslager Frankenstein in Silesia, where they received "conditional state subjecthood" on June 9 in preparation for an anticipated future deployment as colonists farther east in Lublin, Poland. That did not stop the SS from transporting the Kerzans back across the Reich to the commune of Thionville in Lorraine, though they did not stay there long either, crossing the Rhine a second time shortly thereafter on their way to yet another holding station in Leutesdorf, before finally ending up at the former concentration camp of Niederhagen in 1944. Now nestled deep in the Westphalian countryside, Anton and his family worked alongside Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians, all of them sent there for Germanization, living in the shadow of Wewelsburg castle, the spiritual home of the SS.[1]

[1] Norbert Ellermann, "Sloweninnen und Slowenen in den nationalsozialistischen Umsiedlungslagern der Volksdeutschen Mittelstelle Leutesdorf am Rhein und Wewelsburg von 1943-1945," in *Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik und ihre Folgen. Das Beispiel Slowenien*, ed. Oliver von Wrochem (Hamburg: KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, 2010), 44-46.

Throughout the Second World War, as numerous historians have amply demonstrated, Eastern Europe served as the focal point for the genocidal empire-building of the National Socialist regime. It was here that the Nazis deliberately starved entire populations and indiscriminately slaughtered civilians and prisoners of war; it was here that they erected the death camps where millions of Jews and other "undesirables" met a grisly and ignominious end. Scholarship on the wartime Third Reich, therefore, has rightly emphasized that, outside of a few notable exceptions, the peoples of Western and Central Europe were largely spared the violent atrocities suffered by inhabitants of the "bloodlands" to the east of Germany.[2] Yet while certainly valid with respect to actual physical killing, this spatial paradigm tends to obscure the broader motives, dynamics, and realities of German rule. The East was not the only place where the Nazis enacted a systematic platform of ethnic cleansing, racial classification, and cultural genocide, nor was Poland the only country where "lost German blood" supposedly lay hidden. The story of Anton Kerzan is a potent reminder that National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* was a truly transnational enterprise, one that affected civilians from across the continent, yet concentrated on a ring of peripheral borderland areas with a long history of coexistence and conflict between Germans and other ethnic groups. The present chapter offers a comparative analysis of the "hunt for good blood" in a handful of these regions (namely Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg) in order to shed light on this underappreciated facet of Nazi policy-making in occupied Europe.

One could argue that Czechoslovakia, not Poland, marked the true birthplace of Nazi Germanization policy. It was here, after all, in the old Bohemian provinces of the defunct Austrian Habsburg Empire, that the National Socialists brought millions of non-Germans under their control for the first time, here where they began to wrestle with the urgent question of how to incorporate foreign subjects into the Reich in a manner that accorded with racial and *völkisch* principles.[3] The fate of the three million ethnic Germans who inhabited its northwestern frontiers (collectively known as the Sudetenland) supplied Hitler with the initial pretext for dismembering the Czechoslovak state, and soon enough he turned his gaze to the circa 250,000 German-speakers living in other areas that lay within its pre-1938 borders. Yet if the Nazis aimed to safeguard the presence of Germandom in the region, they had their work cut out for them.[4] After nearly a century of competition between Czech and German patriots, virtually every metric (demographic, economic, political) indicated that the former were in the ascendant. Throughout the interwar years, official discrimination and pressure to assimilate marginalized ethnic Germans in districts where they had once formed a majority and in some places pushed them out almost entirely. In 1910, a total of 201,500 Germans lived in the city of Brno (about 66 percent of the

[2] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic, 2010).
[3] Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 185.
[4] For background information, see Detlef Brandes, *Die Tschechen unter deutschem Protektorat, Bd. I. Besatzungspolitik, Kollaboration und Widerstand im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren bis Heydrichs Tod (1939-1942)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1969) 10-20.

population); by 1930, that number had fallen to 21 percent.[5] Time and again, Sudeten German activists warned that all traces of Germanness in the area would soon vanish, blaming the recession on Volksdeutsche who supposedly lacked the ethnic awareness that made the Czechs such formidable opponents – an accusation which reiterated what German nationalists had argued since the late nineteenth century: that most Czechs were actually just unconscious Germans.[6]

This sense of existential crisis, articulated in terms of vulnerability to de-nationalization (or "Czechification"), led many Germans to embrace a racialized explanation for their apparent cultural decline in Bohemia: the myth of "lost German blood." Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, an array of publicists claimed that, dating all the way back to the medieval Holy Roman Empire, virtually all of the Czechs' most famous political leaders, clergy, scholars, artists, and musicians possessed German roots.[7] Applying the concept of racial diffusionism to his own backyard, the sociologist Karl Valentin Müller proposed a direct correlation between the historical development of the Czech people and their biological intermixture with Germanic magnates.[8] Nazi ideologue Albert Rosenberg located the origins of this process in the early fifteenth century, asserting that an autochthonous "Alpine-Dinaric" nobility had launched the Hussite Wars against the Catholic Church and would have triumphed had they not committed the error of rallying the "racially inferior" Czech masses to their cause.[9] These kinds of ideas were incredibly popular among the intellectual cadres of the NSDAP, who generally granted Czechs a prominent rank within their theoretical racial hierarchy of the Slavic nations. Hitler was no different: although fond of highly contemptuous remarks about the Czechs, he also praised their work ethic and intelligence on numerous occasions, attributing these virtues to a "strong German blood supplement" imparted by "centuries of cohabitation with the German *Volk*."[10] Even before the seizure of the Sudetenland, he told his senior military generals that the purpose of invading Czechoslovakia was not just to halt the retreat of Germandom and "preserve the ethnic community," but "to enlarge it."[11] His administrative decree of March 16, 1939 clearly reflected this priority. Whereas Slovakia became a German client state, the remainder of the country was reconstituted as the Protectorate of Bohemia and

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[5] Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 161-167. On Brno, see Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 54.

[6] Pieter M. Judson, "When Is a Diaspora Not a Diaspora? Rethinking Nation-Centered Narratives about Germans in Habsburg East Central Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 239. Also see King, *Budweisers*, 3.

[7] Alan E. Steinweis, "German Cultural Imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Poland, 1938-1945," *The International History Review* 13, No. 3 (August 1991), 471.

[8] Karl Valentin Müller, "Zur sozialanthropologische Bedeutung der Umvolkungsvorgänge im Sudetenraum," *Deutsche Volksforschung in Böhmen und Mähren* 1, no. 1 (1939): 30-37.

[9] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 120.

[10] John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 10, 14. For the quote, see BA NS 2/127/67-68: Fritsche, "Aktenvermerk betr. Feststellung der deutschen Volkszugehörigkeit im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," February 6, 1941.

[11] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 23.

Moravia, headed by the mild-mannered diplomat Konstantin von Neurath as Reichsprotektor (the territories that comprised the Sudetenland had already been formally integrated into the Reich the previous October). While disenfranchising Jews and "racial aliens" as a matter of course, Hitler also ordained a segregated legal system – much like the one that would later appear in western Poland – wherein all other residents of Bohemia-Moravia were to be divided into Reich citizens and "Protectorate subjects." In accordance with the Nuremberg Laws, however, these categories did not necessarily correspond to a straightforward partition between Germans and Czechs. All inhabitants of the Protectorate and the Sudeteland would have the right to apply for citizenship, with the possibility of naturalization intentionally left open to Czech-speakers of "German or kindred blood."[12]

From the outset, then, Nazi designs for the Czechs focused on assimilation. Unlike in Poland, there was no pressing need to carry out mass expulsions or bring in ethnic German colonists in large numbers because most officials believed that the "racial constitution" of the Czechs, far more so than with the Poles, basically matched that of the Germans.[13] Instead of relying on police terror to Germanize the populace by force, Nazi administrators set about gradually winning "hearts and minds," and in this respect they followed closely in the footsteps of their predecessors.[14] National ascription depended on the choices of non-state actors, and it is unquestionable that many Czechs responded favorably to the Nazis' appeal, some seeking recognition as Germans for the same reasons that drove Poles in the incorporated eastern territories to sign up for the Volksliste (to save their jobs, to obtain better pay and rations, to protect themselves from discrimination more generally) even though the legal disadvantages incurred by those who remained on the outside were decidedly less severe than they were in Poland.[15] In each case, material inducements became part and parcel of the Nazis' canvass for the fealty of "racially valuable ethnic aliens." It would be going too far, however, to label this approach as one of "civic" nationalism.[16] While individual confession was crucial to the extent that claimants had to declare their political commitment to Nazism and the larger German nation, the decision ultimately rested with civil servants (the Oberlandräte) who relied on a combination of ethnic and racial criteria.[17] The guidelines issued by the Interior Ministry in March 1939 defined German nationals as individuals "who declare themselves

[12] Adolf Hitler, "Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers betr. das Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," March 16, 1939, *Reichsgesetzblatt* I (1939), 485; BA R 43-II/136/4: Hering to Hess, Ribbentrop, Gürtner, Neurath, Henlein, and Lorenz, March 28, 1939. Only registered members of the Sudeten German Party, that is, the local Nazi outfit, gained automatic citizenship.

[13] Vojtěch Mastný, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance, 1939-1942* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 130, 133. For a more recent interpretation of this policy line, see Detlef Brandes, *"Umvolkung, Umsiedlung, rassische Bestandsaufnahme". NS-"Volkstumspolitik" in den böhmischen Ländern* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 138, 181-182, 245. As of December 1942, in fact, the Nazis had settled only 5,967 Umsiedler in the Protectorate.

[14] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 181-182.

[15] Germans and Czechs, for instance, received roughly the same food rations; see Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 53-54, 72. On the prevalence of opportunism, or "Schweikism," see Mastný, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule*, 160.

[16] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 186-187.

[17] Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 411.

members of the German people, insofar as this affiliation is confirmed by certain factors like language, education, culture, and so forth." Because "someone who stems partially or even fully from another tribe" could "also be considered a German national," on the other hand, prefects had to ascertain whether the person in question represented a "desirable population increase," particularly in cases of doubt or where proof of ancestry did not exist.[18] This methodology allowed ethnic Czechs to register as Volksdeutsche on racial grounds, as opposed to cultural ones. It was hardly a throwback to the egalitarianism of liberal jurisprudence, and the men who adjudicated citizenship requests could be quite strict if they wanted to be. The Oberlandrat in Pardubice, for instance, rejected more than half of the applications he received between March 1939 and November 1940.[19]

The inconsistency of these procedures soon generated all kinds of problems. Protectorate officials who elected to subordinate or disregard *völkisch* prerequisites and accept Czech-speaking applicants on the basis of race could not help but notice that their inclusivity accelerated the lamentable trend of "de-Germanization" rather than reversing it. Even after a year of Nazi rule, the Oberlandrat of Brno wrote in April 1940, the local German element was still "qualitatively and quantitatively on the decline, and in a short time will be doomed."[20] SD officers also warned that German "language islands" in the "ethnically contested" locales of Bohemia stood in greater peril than ever before due to the "startling progress" of "Czech infiltration."[21] In the Sudetenland as well, German community leaders begged the government for increased educational and economic aid; without financial subsidies, they predicted ominously, their constituents would inevitably succumb to Czechification.[22] To avert this outcome, in the spring of 1940 the Nazis began to expand the number of German-language schools, limit the use of Czech in public forums, close down Czech universities and cultural institutions, and transfer their businesses into German hands.[23] It was now abundantly clear that the Czechs posed a serious ethnic threat which would have to be dealt with sooner or later. Yet the authorities also recognized that privileging cultural and political markers of identity would do little to combat the equally troubling phenomenon of national indifference. Bohemia-Moravia, like western Poland, was an ethnographic patchwork of baffling complexity, where Czechs and Germans had socialized, intermarried, and overlapped for centuries and bilingual inhabitants could easily manipulate the system by shifting from one nationality to the other (and back again). In fact, it was here that the terms "intermediary stratum" and "amphibian" first came into common usage during

[18] Hans Pfundtner, "Erlass des Reichsministers betr. Volkszugehörigkeit in das Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," March 29, 1939, *Reichsministerialblatt* IV (1939), 783.

[19] USHMMA 11.001M/23/91/8: Oberlandrat Pardubitz, "Erfassung der deutschen Volkszugehörigen im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," November 30, 1940.

[20] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 54.

[21] Heinz Boberach, *Meldungen aus dem Reich 1938-1945. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS* (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1984), 758.

[22] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 181-182.

[23] Volker Mohn, *NS-Kulturpolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Konzepte, Praktiken, Reaktionen* (Essen: Klartext, 2014), 70-82. Also see Steinweis, "German Cultural Imperialism," 470.

the nineteenth century. And here, just like in the annexed Polish provinces, confusing demographic conditions exacerbated fears of biological contamination and led Nazi bureaucrats to call for a more stringent program of racial selection.[24]

These circumstances reinforced the perception that many Czechs possessed "Nordic stock," and in the spring of 1940 provincial supervisors in Bohemia-Moravia began devoting more and more of their reportage to tales of "lost German blood." The Oberlandrat of Olomouc commented in April that many residents showed unambiguous signs of "racial and ethical worth," yet had not yet come forth to proclaim their Germanness "because they do not know to which side they should belong, due to the fact that their parents belonged to both nationalities." In the absence of more intensive nationality measures, he feared, this "worthy section of the population would be irrevocably lost." His colleague in Prostejov came to a similar conclusion the following month: the Czechs in his district, he asserted, had "some of the best [blood] in the whole Slavic area."[25] That May, one school superintendent in the Sudetenland even took it upon himself to organize racial examinations of Czech-speaking children in Opava; he recorded that half of them had blond hair and one-fourth were blue-eyed, and went on to claim that "racial conditions in the German areas reveal nearly the same racial composition as the pure Czech areas."[26] These opinions soon found their way to the receptive ears of Neurath's department heads in Prague. According to Fritz Platos, chief medical officer for the Protectorate, "mighty currents of German genetic material" had "bestowed the Czechs with Nordic racial stock"; it would therefore be of immense benefit to "regain these currents of good German blood for the German *Volk*."[27] The senior education minister, Rudolf Fitzek, provided a theoretical foundation for the same course of action: "The German *Volk* is not a race, but rather a racial admixture in which the Nordic race has a dominant influence. To conflate German with Nordic, however, is just as incorrect as conflating Slavic with Eastern or East-Baltic. It will therefore be necessary to examine the racial composition of the population in the Protectorate as soon as possible. For obvious reasons, I presume the result will not be unfavorable."[28] Neurath himself weighed in later that summer, submitting an ambitious proposal to Hitler which foresaw the formal Germanization of half the Czechs in Bohemia-Moravia and the expulsion of the rest. "One is continually amazed at the number of blond-haired people with intelligent faces and pleasing bodies," he noted; by extracting these individuals from their native milieu, the Germans would be able to disable the Czech nation permanently.[29]

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[24] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 176, 202.
[25] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 73-74, 119.
[26] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 181, 216.
[27] Michal Šimůnek, "Ein Neues Fach. Die NS-Erb- und Rassenhygiene an der Medizinschen Fakultät der Deutschen Karls-Universität Prag 1939-1945," in *Die Wissenschaft in den böhmischen Ländern 1939-1945*, ed. Antonín Kostlán (Prague: Výzkumné centrum pro dějiny vědy, 2004), 196.
[28] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 179.
[29] Neurath, "Aufzeichnung über die Frage der zukünftigen Gestaltung des böhmisch-mährischen Raumes," August 31, 1940, in *Anatomie okupační politiky hitlerovského Německa v "Protektorátu Čechy a Morava". Dokumenty z období říšského*

As these statements suggest, by the autumn of 1940 the Nazi regime had given up on gradualist, small-scale nationalization initiatives in the Protectorate and begun to contemplate a far more radical solution to the "Czech problem." The man most responsible for managing this transition was Karl Hermann Frank, a widely respected Sudeten German politician who served in personal union as Deputy Reichsprotektor and HSSPF.[30] Inspired by the system of racial classification practiced in the Warthegau, Frank elaborated on Neurath's scheme by advocating similar methods for Bohemia-Moravia in a separate think piece composed for Hitler in August. Drawing directly from the research of Karl Valentin Müller, he maintained that "the successful assimilation efforts of earlier centuries" and a "strong absorption of German blood" not only illustrated "the ability of the Czech nation to realize important cultural achievements… to a much greater extent than, say, the Slavic Poles," but had also created a "racial equivalence" (*rassische Niveaugleichheit*) between Germans and Czechs. It was therefore vital to carry out an aggressive policy of social and cultural elevation encompassing at least several million foreign subjects. To forfeit "racially suitable Czechs" to the other side, Frank continued, would be a self-defeating gesture with adverse economic and military ramifications as well as strictly biological ones. Only after the selection and "recovery" of these people could the SS proceed with "the removal of racially indigestible Czechs," the "anti-state intellectual class," and all other "destructive elements."[31]

On September 23, 1940, Hitler officially endorsed the Neurath-Frank plan, ruling in light of certain "historical and racial-political reasons" that the Germanization of "a greater part of the Czech people" was both possible and necessary; for many of them, this would occur through labor deployment in the Old Reich.[32] Shortly thereafter, a group of jurists, public health advisers, and technocrats at the Office of the Reichsprotektor started revamping their naturalization protocols and working out the details for a comprehensive "racial survey." To begin with, they nullified all previous regulations requiring proof of descent; the unwritten standard before held that applicants should have at least one German grandparent, but now, "given the historical fact of a centuries-long amalgamation between the German and Czech people," local civil servants were expected to "assume a German blood component if the subject can be added to the German *Volk* by virtue of their *racial characteristics*."[33] Figuring out what this meant in practice proved to be a bit trickier. As a rule of thumb, Germanization was supposed to embrace all Czechs who "display a similar racial appearance to the average German [living] east of the

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protektora Konstantina von Neuratha, eds. Miroslav Kárný, Jaroslava Milotová, and Dagmar Moravcová (Prague: ČSAV, 1987), Doc. 102.

[30] For a biography of Frank, see René Küpper, *Karl Hermann Frank (1898-1946). Politische Biographie eines sudetendeutschen Nationalsozialisten* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010).

[31] Frank, "Denkschrift über die Behandlung des Tschechen-Problems und die zukünftige Gestaltung des böhmisch-mährischen Raumes," August 28, 1940, in Kárný, Milotová, and Moravcová, *Anatomie okupační*, Doc. 103.

[32] "Protokoll über die Besprechung Hitlers mit Neurath und Frank," September 23, 1940, in Kárný, Milotová, and Moravcová, *Anatomie okupační*, Doc. 109.

[33] BA NS 2/127/67-68: Fritsche, "Aktenvermerk betr. Feststellung der deutschen Volkszugehörigkeit im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," February 6, 1941 [emphasis in original].

Elbe."[34] Yet without discounting the importance of physical features, most leading Protectorate officials favored the heavily class-based, utilitarian, and eugenic understanding of race then prevalent within the German medical establishment. One set of provisional guidelines dated November 30, 1940 delineated "racially valuable Czechs" as "those inhabitants of the Protectorate in whose families Slavic racial characteristics do not predominate… Slavic racial characteristics include, in addition to Mongolian types, a seriously disorderly or neglectful family life, a lack of any kind of feeling for order [and] for personal and domestic cleanliness, and the absence of any striving for advancement."[35] Another list of possible indicators singled out "upright behavior," "drive," and "performance in business" as the "essential traits of the German *Volk*," with "asocial conduct" as their antithesis.[36]

If Neurath and his underlings assumed that they would oversee this initiative via their own public health officials, however, SS security chief Reinhard Heydrich quickly corrected them by announcing (on Frank's suggestion) that the Race and Settlement Main Office would be responsible for screening the Czech population.[37] The RuSHA race experts had taken a growing interest in the affairs of the Protectorate ever since SD and Gestapo officers stationed there began sharing intelligence with them earlier that year, and in October Heydrich commissioned one of their top analysts, Dr. Walter König-Beyer, to prepare an overview on the "racial structure" of Bohemia-Moravia. The results of his investigation were astounding. After pouring over biometric data gleaned from interwar conscription records, König-Beyer deduced that "the racial image of the Czech population today is essentially better than that of the Sudeten Germans," their strong shares of the "Nordic and Dinaric races" untainted by the corrosive impact of mixing with urban Jews and "foreign-blooded Jesuits." Czech national identity, he concluded, was nothing more than a form of false historical consciousness.[38] The Reichsführer-SS now stepped in as well by introducing the idea of having the RuSHA evaluate Czech schoolchildren. After conferring with Frank in Prague and familiarizing himself with König-Beyer's findings, agency head Otto Hofmann followed suit and drew up a special questionnaire for this exact purpose. "If we can carry out an investigation of the schoolchildren," Himmler told Frank on January 6, 1941, "then for the first time we will have a practical racial sampling of the Czech people."[39] In the meantime, Frank inserted SS men familiar with the praxis of racial selection into the departments charged with implementing

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[34] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 181-182.

[35] Hufnagel, "Vorschläge zur Vorbereitung der Germanisierung (Umvolkung) im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," November 20, 1940, in *Die Vergangenheit warnt. Dokumente über die Germanisierungs- und Austilgungspolitik der Naziokkupanten in der Tschechoslowakei*, ed. Václav Král (Prague: Orbis, 1962), Doc. 17.

[36] BA NS 2/127/67-68: Fritsche, "Aktenvermerk betr. Feststellung der deutschen Volkszugehörigkeit im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," February 6, 1941.

[37] Isabel Heinemann, "*Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut". Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 153.

[38] Ibid., 176-177.

[39] BA NS 2/140/3-4: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz über eine Dienstreise in das Protektorat," September 13, 1940; BA NS 2/56/41-43: Himmler to Hofmann, October 24, 1940; BA NS 2/57/34-35: Hofmann to Himmler, February 17, 1941; BA NS 19/604/105: Himmler to Frank, January 6, 1941.

Germanization policy in the Protectorate and the Sudetenland.[40] Foremost among them was Erwin Künzel, the architect behind the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Łódź, who moved to Prague in mid-February to erect the same type of facility there and began setting up RuSHA branch offices with the Oberlandräte.[41]

After this flurry of activity, however, the operation stalled in the teeth of stiff resistance from provincial administrators. Many of the Sudeten German activists who dominated the ranks of officialdom in Bohemia-Moravia, not to mention their constituents, were appalled by the intention to reward people whom they had been fighting against for decades. "The old native Germans, who had of course maintained their Germanness under the most difficult hardships and tribulations, could not understand this," one resident of Suché Vrbné recalled. A police informant in Jihlava similarly discerned a "lack of willingness and energy" among local Volksdeutsche with regard to "the reclamation of denationalized carriers of German blood." The regional security wing of the SS was also worried about the potential for taking in too many "politically unreliable" opportunists.[42] The same contentious dialectic between race and *Volk* that had divided Nazi functionaries in western Poland now reared its ugly head in the Protectorate as well, as did the struggle for primacy between proponents of anthropological and eugenic versions of race theory. Even those civil servants who supported a wide-ranging policy of Germanization along racial lines often objected to the intrusion of the RuSHA. "Physical racial characteristics," one of them wrote, "are not as significant as mental and intellectual qualities."[43] These disputes rankled within the highest corridors of regional power. Frank's second-in-command, Kurt von Burgsdorff, counseled against "objective" racial testing of any kind. While in agreement that "racially worthy" Czechs should be absorbed into the body politic, he believed that such a "purely theoretical separation" was "most difficult when it comes to practical implementation."[44] The RuSHA still faced an uphill battle; for the time being, the Oberlandräte retained their control over admitting new members into the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

All that changed when Heydrich replaced Neurath on September 27, 1941 and assumed full jurisdiction over racial matters in Bohemia and Moravia as Himmler's delegate for the "consolidation of German ethnicity." Nothing better demonstrates the novelty of the direction Germanization policy would subsequently take than the speech Heydrich delivered on October 2, 1941 at the Černín Palace in Prague Any inkling of popular unrest, he warned, would be crushed with maximum severity (indeed, arrests and executions rose dramatically under his reign). The Czechs, who had purportedly forgotten their "Germanic roots" due to "poor political leadership and the influence of the Jews," would be dissected according to "scientific" racial properties and made to undergo a process of "ethnomorphosis," not

[40] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 175.
[41] BA NS 2/127/62-63: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz über eine Dienstreise in das Protektorat," June 24, 1941.
[42] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 190-191. The quotes are on 179 and 187.
[43] BA NS 2/127/67-68: Fritsche, "Aktenvermerk betr. Feststellung der deutschen Volkszugehörigkeit im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," February 6, 1941.
[44] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 127.

assimilated through the "old ways" of "turning Czech garbage into Germans." Those inhabitants deemed "racially superior" and "well-disposed" toward Nazism would be integrated into the "ethnic community," since their "German blood" afforded an indispensable economic and military resource. The "racially inferior," on the other hand, would be deported to Siberia and the Arctic, unless they showed a pro-German attitude, in which case they would be conscripted as laborers and sterilized. Finally, individuals considered "racially superior" yet "ill-disposed" would either be forced to see the light or "stood up against the wall," lest they one day lead the Slavic peoples in an uprising against the Germans.[45]

Heydrich had all sorts of ideas on how to realize this grandiose project. First, in late 1941 he revived the initiative to screen Czech schoolchildren. RuSHA inspectors in the Protectorate, some of whom had sat on the sidelines for almost a year, now got their long-awaited awaited marching orders. Künzel's branch offices with the Oberlandräte finally started to come online as well. Sometimes the Eignungsprüfer examined children themselves, employing the same methods they had honed in western Poland.[46] In most cases, however, it was Czech physicians who asked the "harmless medical questions which serve as a camouflage [for assessing] racial-biological traits," who photographed their pupils, recorded their eye, hair, and skin color, took measurements of their physique and skull formation, and rated their social skills and intellectual faculties. From time to time, RuSHA personnel supervised these "aptitude tests," in part to make sure the presiding doctor did not covertly sabotage them; otherwise, they collected the resultant data and pictures from the schools and based their judgments on that.[47]

Even in the early stages, however, the numbers coming in from these "school investigations" were not nearly high enough to satisfy Heydrich's appetite, so in February 1942 he unveiled a separate scheme to help "lay the scientific foundations for future Germanization": the issuance of state IDs. The following month, local registrars began summoning denizens by age cohort to show up at a given place and time to pick up their cards. There they would be met by a team of Eignungsprüfer (the so-called "x-ray commissions"), who performed their appraisals under the guise of a campaign to combat the spread of tuberculosis. By the summer of 1942, there were five of these units operating in Bohemia-Moravia, each of them capable of handling around 530 people per day. They visited the residents of Jihlava in April of that year; in July, they were in Budějovice, Brno, and Pardubice; in September 1943, they traveled to Plzeň; the following November, they were in Tábor and Budějovice again. Between July and November 1943 alone, the "x-ray commissions" examined 24, 601 persons. Those who received a positive verdict could presumably submit the "internal passports" distributed to them as evidence of German descent

[45] Heydrich, "Rede in Prague," October 2, 1941, in *Deutsche Politik im "Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren" unter Reinhard Heydrich 1941-1942. Eine Dokumentation*, eds. Miroslav Kárný, Jaroslava Milotová, and Margita Kárná (Berlin: Metropol, 1997), Doc. 22. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 159. Though Heydrich was technically only named as Deputy Reichsprotektor, he became the de facto governor of Bohemia-Moravia.

[46] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/104-105: "Arbeitsgang bei der Wiedereindeutschung," unsigned, undated.

[47] BDC SSO/226a: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz über eine Besprechung mit Stbf. Künzel," January 25, 1941.

when applying for citizenship with the Oberlandräte. Those who did not were branded as "racial undesirables" and earmarked for future expulsion.[48] According to Dr. Erich Hussmann, a leading RuSHA functionary in the Protectorate, a slight majority of the Czechs would fall into the latter category. "Thus far," he wrote in late June 1942, "the investigations have shown that the racial composition of the Czechs contains stronger Eastern and East-Baltic shares than the average of the German *Volk*; in addition, noticeable Inner-Asiatic strains are also present." Hussmann wanted to remove families with a predominance of these "shares" and "strains" as soon as possible, yet questioned "whether we can evacuate a large portion of the Czechs to the East without endangering the economic life of the Reich and the Bohemian-Moravian lands."[49] There was another logistical factor to contemplate as well: that summer, regional railway lines were already jam-packed with trains full of Jews from the Protectorate and Slovakia on their way to ghettoes and killing sites in Poland and the Soviet Union.

The Eignungsprüfer also injected themselves into the practice of regulating marriages between Germans and Czechs. The Nazis had in fact already been active on this front for some time. As of April 1941 at the latest, prospective spouses were required to meet a range of ethnic-political benchmarks, certified by the Gestapo and the NSDAP Kreisleiter: they had to affirm their commitment to National Socialist values, abnegate all foreign cultural influences, guarantee a "German upbringing" for their children, and prove they had not belonged to any pro-Czech organizations or committed "anti-German offenses," though investigators were also obliged "to consider that in many areas a strong Czechification of the German populace has taken place since the first third of the last century." To see past the hazy contours of ethnic affiliation, therefore, both the German partner and their Czech fiancée also had to pass a racial exam and thereby "prove" their "hereditary health," "characterological fitness," and "social worth." "Marriages in which a partner is racially inferior are forbidden," Burgsdorff stipulated in one circular, specifying "anyone who exhibits Jewish, Gypsy, Negro, or other alien blood components."[50] The official writ to perform racial evaluations on marriage applicants actually rested with state physicians from the local public health departments. Equally galling to the Eignungsprüfer, partners in mixed unions that predated the occupation were exempt from scrutiny.[51] In late 1941, however, Heydrich decreed that

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[48] Heydrich, "Ansprache vor Funktionaren der Okkupationsbehörden," February 4, 1942, in Kárný, Milotová, and Kárná, *Deutsche Politik im Protektorat*, Doc. 76; Heydrich to Bormann, May 18, 1942, in Kárný, Milotová, and Kárná, *Deutsche Politik im Protektorat*, Doc. 98; BA NS 2/149/154-158: Hussmann to Poppendieck, December 20, 1942. Also see Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 198, 201-202. The statistics come from Table 5.

[49] Hussmann, "Bericht über die Tagung der Kreisbeauftragen des Rassenpolitisches Amtes und des Gaugrenzlandamtes Niederdonau, June 21, 1942," in *Die Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei 1933-1947. Dokumentensammlung*, ed. Václav Král (Prague: Československá akademie věd, 1964), Doc. 384.

[50] ITS 2.2.0.1.1.179/82331207-210: Burgsdorff to Oberlandräte, April 3, 1941; ITS 2.2.0.1.1.179/82331204-206: Ehlich to Stapo(leit)stellen, SD Abschnitte, and Befehlshaber der SIPO, undated. Also see Michael Šimůnek, "Race, Heredity, and Nationality: Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1945," in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Legacy*, eds. Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen, (London: Berg, 2005), 197.

[51] ITS 2.2.0.1.1.179/82331214-215: Pfundtner, "Verordnung zur Regelung von Staatsangehörigkeitsfragen gegenüber dem Protektorat Böhmen-Mähren," June 6, 1941.

authorization for Germans to wed "ethnic aliens" would henceforth be contingent on SS racial selection throughout the Protectorate. In early 1942, he widened this "marital license procedure" again by instructing his pool of inspectors to screen all Czech women who had married German men before March 16, 1939.[52] As with the DVL in Poland, the Eignungsprüfer soon transformed these prerogatives into a vehicle for bringing "racially valuable" foreigners to Germany "in borderline cases with positive features and endangered German ethnic consciousness."[53] So, for example, a certain SS-Haupsturmführer Jaworek approved the request of Anna A. from Budějovice after judging her intended, Ladislaus M., to be "capable of re-Germanization," yet also advised that they be resettled in the Reich "for the purpose of a more complete education in the German language and entry into the German ethnic substance."[54]

Perhaps most importantly, the Eignungsprüfer were awarded a leading role when it came to the conferral of German citizenship. Already in October 1941 Heydrich had ordered Künzel and his underlings to begin looking into "ethnically questionable" claimants. In a blistering memorandum dated April 1942, he went further, railing against the "obsolete" methods of state bureaucrats and accusing them of fostering a situation wherein "a majority of the so-called Germans are racially and socially inferior to the Czechs and already pose a serious burden for Germandom." In order to exclude those people whose "racial phenotype" marked them out as an "undesirable population increase," Heydrich now compelled the Oberlandräte to comply with the same provisions Himmler had laid down for the re-Germanization of Poles and cooperate with the RuSHA on all naturalization decisions, starting with some twelve thousand as yet unresolved cases.[55] He also commanded the Eignungsprüfer to go back through the files of applicants who had previously obtained German citizenship; if such individuals failed to measure up to the new typology, their naturalization papers and identity cards were revoked, unless it concerned "persons of predominantly German descent."[56] The race inspectors did not confine their attention to just Czechs either. Johannes Preuss, a veteran of the "sifting" actions in the Warthegau, also chose to assess native Slovaks and Hungarians who put in for recognition as Germans.[57]

It is overwhelmingly apparent that the RuSHA thrived in Bohemia-Moravia under Heydrich's patronage, and by early 1942 everything seemed to be running smoothly. The Oberlandrat of Olomouc praised the high level of cooperation between the Eignungsprüfer and his staff as a fruitful exchange of

[52] BA NS 2/153/33-41: Hildebrandt, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des RuSHA auf dem Gebiet des Staatsangehörigkeitswesens in Böhmen und Mähren," January 25, 1944; BA NS 2/154/115-118: Klinger, "Runderlass über die Regelung von Staatsangehörigkeitsfragen bei Eheschliessungen, September 25, 1944.

[53] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 214-215.

[54] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 172.

[55] USHMMA 48.005M/2: Heydrich, "Vermerk über den Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit auf Grund der Verordnung vom 20.4.1939, April 16, 1942; USHMMA 48.005M/2: Fuchs to Oberlandräte in Bohemia-Moravia, April 16, 1942.

[56] BA NS 2/153/33-41: Hildebrandt, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des RuSHA auf dem Gebiet des Staatsangehörigkeitswesens in Böhmen und Mähren," January 25, 1944.

[57] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 221. Himmler had also proposed the racial selection and Germanization of Slovaks in general, though several thousand native ethnic Germans from Slovakia joined the Waffen-SS, the plan was dropped in the autumn of 1942; see Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 608-609.

practical knowledge in which the former gained experience in the conventions of day-to-day governance and the latter acquired in-depth training in the "science" of racial classification. "Only those capable of re-Germanization are accepted into the German state community," he added.[58] Still, there were many Nazi administrators who refused to go along with the new order of things. The head of the NSDAP Borderland Office in Liberec, Franz Künzel (not to be confused with Erwin Künzel, head of the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Prague), argued that political behavior during the interwar "time of struggle" ought to carry far more weight than abstract racial criteria. Too many Oberlandräte, he complained, were "playing fast and loose with the determination of ethnicity" and ignoring whether claimants could actually verify German descent. He furthermore rejected the integration of inhabitants from the *Zwischenschicht*, regardless of their "racial worth," on the grounds that they had "changed their national affiliation." Taken aback, RuSHA delegates insisted that a taxonomy which focused primarily on ethnic-political attributes would necessarily hinder the aim of destroying the Czech nation by wresting away its "Nordic biological core." One of them explicated their reasoning this way: "The racially valuable persons are strongly attached to their own nationality and have thus staunchly opposed Germans in the past, while the racially inferior persons, by surrendering an honest association with their own *Volk*, appear especially submissive. There is no enrichment to be gained for our *Volk* by taking in these kinds of fickle people. Our efforts must instead be oriented around leading the racially valuable families back into our body politic."[59] Another examiner offered the same paradoxical rationale: "In general, it is only the worst who say 'We want to be Germans,' while the better ones, racially speaking, continue to side with their Slavic peoples."[60]

This bone of contention was not new, not even within the context of Czechoslovakia. Nazi officials tasked with the classification of foreign populations did not conflate race with political values; rather, they saw the two as being diametrically opposed and held differing opinions over what to do with those subjects Heydrich dubbed "racially superior yet ill-disposed." HSSPF Frank, for instance, had recommended deporting the entire Czech intelligentsia back in the fall of 1940 because he felt they were beyond salvaging and would otherwise "disrupt a rapid assimilation" by stirring up trouble among the masses. "Elements who work against the intended Germanization," he declared, "must be handled sharply and eliminated."[61] However, many consultants in the Office of the Reichsprotektor contested this view. The whole point of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik*, they reminded their associates, was to awaken "the willingness for assimilation among resistant yet racially valuable personalities"; even if the isolation of "anti-state elements" proved warranted, "the possibility of a future ethnomorphosis among their

[58] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 162.
[59] BA NS 19/2875/3: Künzel to Schulte-Schomberg, February 1942.
[60] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 334n.
[61] Friderici to Keitel, October 15, 1940, in Král, *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, Doc. 15.

descendants must not be forsaken."[62] There were many within the Protectorate regime who sympathized with Franz Künzel's ethnic-political approach too, and pushback against the RuSHA at the ground level certainly did not abate with time. But by the early spring of 1942 such figures had been sidelined (Künzel himself was removed from his post and replaced by an SS man).[63] The leader of the Party Liaison Office in Prague, Gustav Adolf Schulte-Schomberg, articulated the closest thing to a consensus that Nazi functionaries in Bohemia-Moravia ever achieved on this all-important issue: "the assimilation of the Czechs has to take place almost exclusively on the basis of racial selection… the largest segment of the population must be raised into Germans… the children of the most fanatical Czechs of the past twenty years are more valuable for Germanization than these unprincipled rascals who switch their outlook from one day to the next. The Czechs who do not want to become Germans must be forced to do so or shot."[64] This is exactly what Heydrich had in mind too. That May, he claimed that the leader of Sokol (a nationalist Czech athletic organization brutally suppressed by the Nazis) had a "pure German father and pure German mother." On another occasion, he remarked that the mother of Alois Eliáš (the nominal Prime Minister of the Protectorate) also bore Germanic features. That did not stop Heydrich from sentencing Eliáš to death for collusion with the underground resistance.[65]

And then, in late May 1942, just when his power had grown seemingly unassailable, Heydrich was assassinated by two British-trained Czech operatives. Those who had opposed him now exploited his absence as a chance to restore their autonomy. RuSHA leaders in Berlin presumed that their subordinates would exercise the decisive vote in naturalization proceedings, but they still had to account for the input of administrative and Party officials. In the wake of Heydrich's death, ideological differences and political rivalries quickly reemerged.[66] "We will never make a German out of a Czech," one NSDAP bureaucrat told Hussmann in late June, "We must instead find a way to get rid of the Czechs. That is our goal."[67] It became ever more common throughout that summer for local civil servants to disregard the rulings of the Eignungsprüfer with the explanation that only they had the requisite firsthand knowledge to establish the true ethnic and racial identity of their constituents.[68] Public health doctors were no more compliant, once again showing a talent for turning routine checkups into hereditary assessments that conflicted with the rulings of the race examiners. By November 1942, the resulting disputes had gotten so

[62] Hufnagel, "Vorschläge zur Vorbereitung der Germanisierung (Umvolkung) im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," November 20, 1940, in Král, *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, Doc. 17.

[63] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 177.

[64] Schulte-Schomburg to Heydrich, March 11, 1942, in Kárný, Milotová, and Kárná, *Deutsche Politik im Protektorat*, Doc. 87.

[65] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 158.

[66] BA NS 2/154/115-118: Klinger, "Runderlass über die Regelung von Staatsangehörigkeitsfragen bei Eheschliessungen," September 25, 1944.

[67] Hussmann, "Bericht über die Tagung der Kreisbeauftragen des Rassenpolitisches Amtes und des Gaugrenzlandamtes Niederdonau," June 21, 1942," in Král, *Die Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei*, Doc. 384.

[68] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 157.

out of hand that Preuss had to create an independent medical department within the Aussenstelle in Prague in order to get around his reliance on state physicians.[69] Even fellow SS officers could not always be counted on. That same autumn, Hofmann learned that Gestapo and SD stations regularly turned to the public health offices for a racial evaluation, instead of the RuSHA, when investigating German-Czech mixed marriages.[70] Much like in western Poland, the definition of Germanness in the Czech lands was characterized by inconsistent methods, inter-agency feuds, and an institutional malaise that bordered on dysfunction. It was a setting in which only 10 percent of applicants acquired citizenship in one district, while down the road in another the total was as high as 78 percent.[71] As if to add insult to injury, the deportations never materialized. No matter how much they wanted to do away with the Czechs ("racially undesirable" or otherwise), the need for manpower in Germany and the importance of the Bohemian armaments industry meant that the Nazis could not simply "get rid" of millions of able-bodied laborers.[72] This was a reality that none of the various factions in the Protectorate were happy about.

With that being said, one must be careful not to exaggerate the decline of SS fortunes in the aftermath of Heydrich's demise. Wartime exigencies took deportations off the table – at least those not directed toward Germany – but they did not temper the edge of the "hunt for good blood." Reeling from the loss of his right hand man, Himmler nevertheless resolved in June 1942 to move forward with the Germanization of Bohemia-Moravia "according to racial principles."[73] The next month, Protectorate leaders reaffirmed the standing arrangement that gave RuSHA inspectors a voice in the processing of naturalization requests; they still presided over citizenship applications right alongside representatives of the civil service, the Nazi Party, and the public health offices. It is simply inaccurate to claim, as many have, that the Nazis abandoned Germanization measures in Czechoslovakia once "The Butcher of Prague" was no longer there to see them through. Heydrich's ghost cast a long shadow. For one thing, during the course of 1942 the RuSHA expanded its geographical purview ever farther into the Sudetenland. The Eignungsprüfer stationed there had already obtained permission in May to screen native Czechs who petitioned for the right to marry German citizens, as well as those who wished to join the Hitler Youth or attend schools in the Old Reich. They also inspected Czech schoolchildren (and their families) in "ethnically endangered districts."[74] By the end of the year, some ten thousand families and two thousand individuals in the Sudetenland, nearly all of them Czech-speakers, had undergone an

[69] NS 2/82/146-147: Preuss to Prato, November 7, 1942.
[70] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.
[71] Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 161.
[72] Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 186.
[73] Agnes F. Peterson and Bradley F. Smith, eds., *Heinrich Himmler. Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen* (Munich: Propyläen, 1974),146-161.
[74] Schmauser to Henlein, May 18, 1942, in Král, *Die Deutschen in der Tschechoslowakei*, Doc. 373.

RuSHA racial examination.[75] As of October 1943, that number had increased by a further 11,804 subjects, and 72 percent of them were deemed "capable of re-Germanization."[76] Back in the Protectorate, HSSPF Frank, who had stepped in to fill the void left by Heydrich, announced in the spring of 1943 that all new recruits for the Czech uniformed police and indigenous military-security units (the so-called Regierungstruppe) would also have to meet the standards of the Eignungsprüfer. This endeavor was originally a brainchild of Heydrich's; Frank converted it into a genuine acculturation program, dispatching trainees to Düsseldorf, Oberhausen, and Recklinghausen, where they received German language lessons (ten hours per week) and "proved themselves" serving as auxiliary firefighters. Some even helped rescue German civilians trapped beneath the rubble left by Allied bombing raids.[77]

These young men were not the only "racially valuable" Czechs whom the Nazis sent to Germany. Frank had already recognized the benefits of "intensified labor deployment" in the Reich as a means of enhanced Germanization in the fall of 1940. His colleagues in the Office of the Reichsprotektor proposed the same thing, particularly as a way to fill empty public sector jobs with Germanizable civil servants whose presence within the occupation bureaucracy had become "superfluous." In their minds, working in close proximity with Reich German civilians would naturally do much more to "integrate [Czechs] into the German way of life" than residing among their conationals in Bohemia-Moravia ever could.[78] There were echoes here of Greiser's rationale for deporting "ethnically questionable" Volksliste members: anyone who might undermine the "consolidation of Germandom" in the borderlands would ostensibly pose far less of a political threat in the interior of Germany itself. Like the technocrats who ran the UWZ in Poland, moreover, Nazi leaders in the Protectorate were keen to fuse compulsory labor service into the fabric of Germanization policy. To that end, Burgsdorff met with SD commander Horst Böhme on August 27, 1941 to devise a corresponding framework. Because it was "necessary to determine the percentage of Czechs who come into question for Germanization according to racial principles," public health doctors and police officers attached to the labor offices would conduct investigations on Czech conscripts in order to "cull the undesirable elements" and funnel the rest into Germany, where they would be induced to experience a "change in attitude" toward their compatriots and "Germanized with all means" by a special division of the German Labor Front. Under no circumstances, the guidelines emphasized, were German civilians or agents of the state to defame or "brand these Czechs as second-class citizens"; that would only undermine the effectiveness of the prescribed "assimilation measures."[79]

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[75] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 179.

[76] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 216-217.

[77] Heydrich to Bormann, May 18, 1942, in Kárný, Milotová, and Kárná, *Deutsche Politik im Protektorat*, Doc. 98. Also see Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 191, 220.

[78] Friderici to Keitel, October 15, 1940, in Král, *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, Doc. 15; Hufnagel, "Vorschläge zur Vorbereitung der Germanisierung (Umvolkung) im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren," November 20, 1940, in Král, *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, Doc. 17. Also see Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 180-181.

[79] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 196-197.

It was Heydrich who brought this plan to fruition, albeit with one key adjustment. On February 4, 1942, he directed local labor officials to gather Czech draftees in holding camps so that the RuSHA could assess them before their transfer to Germany.[80] This "disguised method" of Germanization started out small, with the exchange of three hundred skilled metal workers between the labor offices in Brno and Stuttgart that same month. They were soon followed by some seven thousand postal clerks and nine thousand railwaymen who ended up all over the Reich (though not in Austria or the Sudetenland).[81] In conjunction with the Reich Food Estate, the Protectorate regime also supplied an unknown number of young Czech peasants for training in modern agricultural techniques and "sedentarization" in a "pure German environment"; they too had to pass a racial evaluation beforehand. Heydrich's successor, Kurt Daluege (another high-ranking SS security officer), augmented this initiative. In the summer of 1942, he recommended that Czech volunteers, in addition to forced laborers, should also settle in Germany insofar as they "come into question for a gradual Germanization." That August, Labor Minister Seldte agreed to begin with a small contingent of two thousand men and women who would work closely beside Germans in a variety of professions.[82] With all their other responsibilities, of course, the RuSHA could not possibly hope to keep pace with the enormous scale of demand, even with thirty Eignungsprüfer available in Bohemia-Moravia as of December 1942 (the same number then engaged at the Aussenstelle in Łódź). During the final two years of the war, the race inspectors vetted 13,088 "persons of Czech or other non-German ethnicity" earmarked for labor deployment and classified 7,111 of them as Germanizables. There were approximately 360,000 "Protectorate subjects" working in Germany by April 1944.[83]

It is important to mention here that, with a few possible exceptions, Czechs were not formally enrolled as such in the Re-Germanization Procedure. For many Nazi leaders, however, such distinctions were immaterial. Regulations on the treatment of Czech workers in the Old Reich were remarkably lenient compared to the draconian rules under which other Slavic forced laborers lived precisely because of the belief that "the German essence has stamped its mark not only on the topography of the Protectorate, but on the people as well… the Czech nation is therefore related to the German *Volk* to a significant degree." Not everyone was content with this perspective or its wide-ranging implications. Stuckart complained to Daluege in May 1943 about the "Czechophile-sounding sentences" that saturated relevant decrees. Frank countered by reminding detractors that the General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment (Fritz Sauckel), the Party Chancellery, and the German Labor Front had each signed off on this format. One could not equate Czechs with "the Poles or especially the Eastern peoples," he insisted, for they were "obviously neither Asiatic subhumans nor mere work-coolies." Instead, policy-making

[80] Heydrich, "Ansprache vor Funktionaren der Okkupationsbehörden," February 4, 1942, in Kárný, Milotová, and Kárná, *Deutsche Politik im Protektorat*, Doc. 76.
[81] Brandes, *Die Tschechen unter deutschem Protektorat*, 345.
[82] Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 192-193.
[83] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 163-164; Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 191-192, Table 8.

decisions had to reflect "what every adult German in this region knows: [that] the Czech population has a relatively high quotient of German blood."[84]

Most historians who have studied the history of the Czech lands under National Socialist rule emphasize the marked contrasts between the relatively lenient occupation regime there and the incomparably more violent manner in which the Germans went about governing Poland. Be that as it may, the similarities are also quite noteworthy. All in all, between 1942 and 1945 the RuSHA examined at least 430,000 people in the Protectorate and the Sudetenland, nearly all of them Czech-speakers. Just under half of these subjects attained a positive "racial grade", roughly matching the initial estimates of Nazi theoreticians.[85] By the end of the Second World War, around three hundred thousand Czechs had become German citizens – some having satisfied the anthropological criteria of the Eignungsprüfer, some due to a favorable hereditary assessment by public health doctors, and some through the good graces of more ethnocentric local officeholders.[86] And these figures do not even cover the hundreds of thousands of laborers slated for (de-)nationalization in the Reich. Ironically, such a high volume suggests more in common with the expansive racially-based assimilation policies implemented in Danzig-West Prussia and Upper Silesia, where the RuSHA inspectors had limited influence, than with Greiser's Warthegau, where they enjoyed somewhat more clout yet could not overturn the prevailing regimen of ethnic-political reliability. The same ranking of priorities also held sway in the location of our next case study: Slovenia.

It may seem odd in hindsight that this small country would become a major arena of Nazi demographic engineering. At the time, however, it made perfect sense, for Slovenia shared much in common with western Poland as well as Czechoslovakia.[87] Before joining the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1919, the old crownlands of Lower Styria and Upper Carniola had belonged to the Austrian Habsburg Empire – another setting in which a German elite had for centuries ruled over a Slavic-speaking majority regarded (at least since the 1840s) as incapable of true culture and state formation.[88] These provinces formed a flashpoint in the heated ethnic struggles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when a series of nationalist organizations, political parties, and state agencies tried to Germanize the Slovenes through various means of structural violence. As in Upper Silesia, long-simmering tensions

[84] Küpper, *Karl Hermann Frank*, 294. It is unclear why the Nazis did not include Czechs in the WED.

[85] Between February 1943 and February 1945, the RuSHA examined 48,184 families (approximately 150,000 people), though this figure does not include the roughly 40,000 children and their families (around 120,000 people) who also underwent an RuSHA investigation during this timeframe; see Brandes, *Umvolkung*, 209, Table 4. We can only confirm 58,000 subjects for 1942, though the statistical evidence for that year is woefully incomplete and the overall number was almost certainly higher; see Brandes, *Die Tschechen unter deutschem Protektorat*, 239; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 164.

[86] Tara Zahra, "Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1945," *Central European History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 529-530.

[87] For information on the German occupation of Slovenia, see Tone Ferenc, *Nacistična raznarodovalna politika v Sloveniji v letih 1941-1945* (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1968); Stefan Karner, *Die Steiermark im Dritten Reich 1938-1945. Aspekte ihrer politischen, wirtschaftlich-sozialen und kulturellen Entwicklung* (Graz: Leykam, 1986); Tamara Griesser-Pečar, *Das zerissene Volk – Slowenien 1941-1946. Okkupation, Kollaboration, Bürgerkrieg, Revolution* (Vienna: Böhlaur, 2003).

[88] Klaus Thörner, *"Der ganze Südosten ist unser Hinterland". Deutsche Südosteuropapläne von 1840 bis 1945* (Freiburg: ça ira, 2008), 19-133.

boiled over into armed clashes in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.[89] Slovenes who lived within the truncated borders of the interwar Austrian Republic suffered two decades of renewed pressure to renounce their cultural heritage; the Yugoslav government responded in kind by discriminating against ethnic German minorities in Slovenia.[90] Long before the Nazi takeover in 1938, Austrian academics had adopted the revanchist ideas of *Ostforschung* and founded their own network of research institutes dedicated to returning Lower Styria and Upper Carniola to their former masters.[91]

It is little wonder, then, that fantasies of "lost German blood" came to fixate on this land as well. Several weeks after the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the head of the EWZ, Dr. Martin Sandberger, posited that Germans had inhabited Upper Carniola since the time of Charlemagne; though many fled during the Counter-Reformation, those who remained had intermarried with the Slovenes and inadvertently endowed them with the biological capabilities of a modern nation.[92] When it came to Lower Styria, Bruno K. Schulz went back even further in time, claiming that the Taurisci (a federation of Celtic-Gallic tribes who occupied the region circa 200 B.C.) had "brought the first wave of Nordic blood [*nordische Blutswelle*] and laid the groundwork for Nordic leadership."[93] Hans Ehlich of the RSHA extended these arguments to practically all the nationalities of the Balkans: "If we look at the history of southeastern Europe, it is apparent that the non-Germanic peoples of this region were only capable of the most primitive cultural and political accomplishments at the beginning of the Middle Ages." Over the course of an "assimilation process lasting centuries," he contended, these groups had "soaked up large quantities of valuable German genetic material." As a result, "the Germans served as cultural fertilizer for numerous other peoples" and "continuously lost biologically valuable resources." Ehlich counseled that all National Socialists should keep this legacy in the forefront of their minds "because we can learn much from it for the future."[94] One NSDAP bureaucrat in Upper Carniola certainly took it to heart when he

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[89] For a detailed history of this conflict, see Hanns Haas and Karl Stuhlpfarrer, *Österreich und seine Slowenen* (Vienna: Löcker & Wögenstein, 1977). Also see Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 107-120.

[90] See Augustin Malle, "Die Lage der Slowenen in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Die Deportation slowenischer Familien aus Kärnten 1942. Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Karl Stuhlpfarrer (Vienna: Universität Klagenfurt, 2004), 44-45. Also see Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 186.

[91] Karl Stuhlpfarrer, "Umsiedlungen und Deportationen während des zweiten Weltkriegs," in *Pregon koroških Slovencev – Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-2002*, ed. Augustin Malle (Klagenfurt: Drava, 2002), 125-126.

[92] BA R 69/1168/ 24-27: Sandberger, "Völkischer Aufbau Krains, vom geschichtlichen und Rassenstandpunkt aus betrachtet," April 18, 1941. At first the Nazis referred to this territory as Southern Carinthia (*Südkärnten*), since it included a slice of the old Habsburg province of Carinthia that went to Yugoslavia in 1920 and was then formally annexed to the Reich in 1941. Only in January 1942 did they change the name back to the traditional designation for the much larger Gorenjska region (Upper Carniola, or *Oberkrain*), which I have chosen to use throughout for the sake of convenience. It should be noted, however, that in administrative parlance the Germans often conflated these two areas, given that they belonged to the same Gau. Lower Styria (*Untersteiermark*), on the other hand, always remained a separate entity.

[93] Schultz to Lurker, September 10, 1941, in *Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Entnationalisierungspolitik in Slowenien 1941-1945*, ed. Tone Ferenc (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1980), Doc. 127.

[94] Ehlich, "Die Behandlung des fremden Volkstums," December 10-11, 1942, in *"Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, eds. Mechtild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher, and Cordula Tollmien (Berlin: Akadamie, 1993), 48-52.

warned superiors about the danger of local Slovene intellectuals with "Nordic blood," alleging that they were responsible for filling the populace with "chauvinistic and Pan-Slavic ideas" in the 1880s and precipitating the downfall of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918. In his mind, there was only one way to counteract these "most capable and dogged leaders" of the Slovenian national movement: "A strict selection of anyone who demonstrates their capacity for Germanization."[95]

Although the Germans decided to conquer Yugoslavia for political and strategic reasons – mainly to depose a nationalist Serb junta in Belgrade considered inimical to their interests – the occupation quickly became an excuse to enact radical measures of ethnic homogenization that Austrian Nazis in Graz and Klagenfurt had dreamed about for decades.[96] It was no accident that, after carving off pieces of Slovenia to give to his allies (Italy, Hungary, and the fascist Independent State of Croatia), Hitler awarded the (informally) annexed territories of Lower Styria and Upper Carniola to the two Gauleiter who presided over the most apoplectic hotbeds of anti-Slovene agitation in all of Austria: Siegfried Uiberreither in Styria and Franz Kutschera in Carinthia. Given that their Gaue lay adjacent to the lands in question, Uiberreither and Kutschera had proposed such an arrangement even before the invasion began, with the aim of Germanizing the Slovenes en masse and colonizing ethnic Germans in the counties around Maribor, the capitol of Lower Styria.[97] After their appointment as chiefs of civil administration in the occupied territories in April 1941, the Gauleiter wasted little time in executing Hitler's commandment to "Make this land German for me again!" On the heels of the Wehrmacht came an army of police officers, administrators, and Party militants who waged the same kind of ethnic warfare their comrades had previously unleashed on Poland and (to a lesser extent) Bohemia-Moravia: they burned libraries and archives, shuttered cultural institutions, banned the use of the Slovenian tongue in public, reversed the names of towns and geographical features to their German forms, and arrested anyone believed to be a member of the political or intellectual elite. To complement this onslaught, however, Uiberreither and Kutschera each created their own Party organizations (the Styrian Home League and the Carinthian People's League) to incorporate "the German people of these areas who strive for a return to the German ethnic community on the basis of their Aryan-Germanic blood-share."[98] Soon enough, German language courses were made compulsory, and eventually some four hundred thousand locals signed up for them.[99]

As in the Czech lands, the centerpiece of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* in Slovenia was assimilation, for the Nazis simply assumed that most Slovenes were German by descent. What Slovenes themselves believed did not matter in the slightest. Shortly after the occupation began, Kutschera issued

[95] BA R 49/3561/67-71: Kreisamtsleiter Veldes, "Bericht betr. Hochschulstudium der Oberkrainer," September 23, 1942.

[96] Valentin Sima, "Die Vertreibung slowenischer Familien als Höhepunkt deutschnationaler Politik in Kärnten," in Malle, *Die Vertreibung*, 142-143. Also see the introduction in Stuhlpfarrer, *Die Deportation*, 13-14.

[97] Stuhlpfarrer, "Umsiedlungen und Deportationen," 125.

[98] Demir Cesar, *Die Volkstumspolitik des NS-Regimes in Slowenien 1941-1943* (Munich: GRIN, 2013), 7-13.

[99] Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 203.

the following public address to his new subjects: "You have now become residents of this proud Reich. However, you are anything but strangers to us since you are related to the Germans in blood and in spirit. In your veins too there flows German blood, although you are no longer aware of that fact." Uiberreither uttered similar pronouncements, invoking the rhetoric of earlier German nationalists to argue that Lower Styrians were actually "Wends" (*Windischen*) – an age-old catch-all term used at one time or another to denote practically every Slavophone minority group living between the Baltic and the Adriatic – who derived their racial complexion from Germanic ancestors. At the same time, the Gauleiter had little to no patience whatsoever for "Slovenized Wends" or "national Slovenes" and wanted them removed straightaway. They acknowledged that isolating said individuals would not be easy, however, in a region known for its bilingualism and fuzzy ethnographic contours, where some people spoke Slovenian yet identified as Germans and many did so without espousing a distinct Slovenian national consciousness.[100]

Thus, before the Yugoslav government even had a chance to capitulate, Himmler sent in his specialists to prepare for a massive campaign of racial classification and ethnic cleansing. Given that the deportations from western Poland came to a close around the same time, many of these men leapt at the opportunity to ply their trade elsewhere. Sandberger arrived in Maribor sometime during the second week of April; by then, Schultz had already set up an RuSHA command center in Graz. The RKF Staff Main Office also established an outpost in Maribor under Erwin Seftschnig, as well as one in Bled (the provincial seat of Upper Carniola) under Alois Maier-Kaibitsch.[101] Each of these stations reported directly to Fähndrich's deputy, Dr. Günther Stier, another career technocrat from Greifelt's circle.[102] Bringing expertise gained in Poland – Höppner and Krumey even came down to provide on the spot troubleshooting – these men rapidly constructed a bureaucratic edifice for implementing wholesale population transfers. Before the month was out, they had formed two resettlement staffs, each subordinate to Ehlich and Heydrich at the RSHA and outfitted with a team of race inspectors charged with the "examination of ethnic aliens as to their racial suitability for Germanization."[103] As in Poland, the colonization of ethnic Germans served as a catalyst for the ejection of indigenous non-German peoples.[104] Unlike in Poland or in Bohemia-Moravia, however, here the SS, the Party, and the state bureaucracy were

[100] Alexa Stiller, "On the Margins of the Volksgemeinschaft: Criteria for Belonging to the Volk within the Nazi Germanization Policy in the Annexed Territories, 1939-1945," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism*, eds. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 245.

[101] BA R 69/1168: Sandberger to EWZ Berlin, April 15, 1941. Also see Eckart Dietzfelbinger, "…dieses Land wieder ganz und gar deutsch zu machen". Das Motiv der 'Rasse" in der NS-Ideologie und seine Umsetzung am Beispiel Slowenien," in *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord. NS-Unrecht in Slowenien und seine Spuren in Bayern 1941-1945*, eds. Gerhard Jochem und Georg Seiderer (Berlin: Metropol, 2005), 35-36.

[102] See Stier's testimony in LOC/NMT, 924-931.

[103] Heydrich, "Anordnung für die Errichtung eines Umsiedlungsstabes in Marburg," April 12, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 15. Also see Andreas Strippel, "Besatzungspolitik und Zwangsgermanisierung in Slowenien – Umsiedlungs-Vertreibungspolitik und Selektionpraxis," in Wrochem, *Germanisierungspolitik*, 208-209.

[104] Andreas Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1939-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 21.

all on the same page from the get-go. All that remained to decide was whom to deport, how many of them to deport, and where to deport them to. The RKF estimated that at least 130,000 Slovenes would have to leave for other parts of Yugoslavia in order to "pacify" the area and make room for an anticipated sixty-eight thousand Volksdeutsche, most of them from territories controlled by the Italians, particularly Ljubljana and Kocevje (or Gottschee, as the Germans called it), along with a smaller number from exclaves in Bukovina, Bessarabia, Dobrudja, Bosnia, and Slavonia.[105] Heydrich raised the target figure of deportees to 260,000, all of whom would be expelled to Serbia.[106] The Reichsführer-SS, however, soon broached an alternative. At a meeting with representatives of the government ministries in Maribor on May 6, 1941, RKF delegates suggested that "racially valuable" Slovenes who posed a danger to the local "ethnic struggle" should instead enter the Re-Germanization Procedure.[107]

The deportation guidelines Himmler issued for Lower Styria typified this attempt to strike a balance between ethnic-political and racial-demographic imperatives. While specifying the removal of the "entire Slovenian intelligentsia," all Slovenes who had immigrated to the area after 1914, and "the occupants of villages throughout Lower Styria who manifestly present the image of an alien blood-share," he also ordered a "rough selection" of the first two groups to select families who were "racially worthy but nationally unreliable… [whom] we do not want to hand over to a foreign nation."[108] As one EWZ official later explained, "Racially valuable individuals who showed their political unreliability were resettled in the Old Reich so as to be re-Germanized… because their residence in this ethnically endangered environment was unacceptable."[109] Himmler's model caught on quickly in Upper Carniola too. One official working in Maier-Kaibitsch's RKF field office in Bled recommended screening the intelligentsia on May 22; Kutschera demanded it a short time later. "We cannot roundly expel these people," he insisted, "and thereby supply the Serbs with blood that will one day be of valuable service to them and create problems for us."[110] After conferring with Ehlich on the matter, Fähndrich produced the following instructions for "evacuations" in Upper Carniola: "At the request of the Gauleiter of Carinthia… the Slovenian intelligentsia will undergo a racial examination. The racially valuable (groups I and II) are not to be evacuated to Serbia, but rather transferred to the Reich for Germanization."[111] In

[105] Stier, "Vermerk betr. Umsiedlung in Untersteiermark und Krain," April 17, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 21.
[106] Heydrich to Krosigk, April 21, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 27.
[107] Strippel, "Besatzungspolitik und Zwangsgermanisierung," 209.
[108] Himmler, "Richtlinien für die Aussiedlung fremdvölkischer Elemente in den Gebieten der Südsteiermark," April 18, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 23.
[109] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.
[110] Starzacher, "Denkschrift über die Wege, die besetzten Gebiete Kärntens kulturell und völkisch in den Altgau Kärnten und das Reich einzugliedern," May 22, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 67; BA NS 2/127/60-61: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz über eine Fahrt durch die Süd-Steiermark und Kärnten," May 24, 1941.
[111] BA R 186/11: Greifelt to Ehlich, Hofmann, Maier-Kaibitsch, and Seftschnig, July 7, 1941.

Yugoslavia, as in western Poland and the Protectorate, the Nazis grounded their policies on the belief that the most dangerous "ethnic aliens" also possessed the most "valuable German blood."

In the spring of 1941, the managers of the RKF complex cobbled together a logistical framework for extracting these people from their native habitat and accommodating them in Germany. Greifelt visited Lower Styria and Upper Carniola on May 6 to check on the preparations of his subordinates, who were busy hashing out the particulars on the ground – namely by forming a chain of transit camps leading from the lands between the Sava, Sutla, and Dravijna rivers, up through the Karawanks, and into Austria.[112] Hofmann also traveled throughout the region on another one of his fact-finding missions. During the period of May 13-18, he met with Kutschera and toured a number of villages and small communes, where local authorities presented the inhabitants so that he could perform a "sample evaluation" of their "racial characteristics."[113] After consulting his top advisers, on June 4, 1941 Himmler released Ordinance 34/I concerning the "re-Germanization of persons of foreign nationality from Southern Carinthia [Upper Carniola] and Lower Styria," which essentially notified SS functionaries in southern and western Germany to make ready for the arrival of such people.[114] All that summer, Greifelt and Fähndrich wired the HSSPFs a stream of supplementary directives dealing with concomitant technical and administrative matters: the allocation of "suitable" housing and jobs (especially in the industrial sector), collaboration with the Party, the Reich Food Estate, and the Labor Ministry, the processing of requests from German enterprises and private citizens, and so on.[115] The lower echelons of the Nazi regime were also brought on board; in Hesse, for instance, the Landräte received Himmler's decree and corresponding guidelines on June 28.[116] Although the deployment of Slovenes took immediate precedence, for all intents and purposes their integration transpired "according to the same procedure for the deployment of re-Germanizable persons from the incorporated eastern territories [of Poland]."[117]

Deportations from Lower Styria began in mid-April 1941. The first wave lasted until July and included 4,864 individuals, many of whom the Gestapo had already detained: politicians, state officials, teachers, academics, and, above all, priests, many of them pointed out to the police by local Volksdeutsche and pro-German Slovenes. A second wave then took place between July 10 and September 27, this one encompassing 9,713 civilians who had immigrated to Lower Styria in the decades following the First World War. After a stint in the transit camps of Kaserne Melje and Brestanica, nearly all of these

[112] Meyer, "Vermerk betr. die Dienstreise in den neuen Südostgebiete," May 28, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 77.
[113] BA NS 2/127/60-61: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz über eine Fahrt durch die Süd-Steiermark und Kärnten," May 24, 1941.
[114] BA R 186/11: Himmler, "Anordnung 34/I," June 4, 1941.
[115] BA R 49/73/35-37: Greifelt to HSSPFs, June 9, 1941; BA R 49/73/52-53: Fähndrich to Hofmann, Ehlich, and HSSPFs, July 30, 1941.
[116] HStD G 15, J 534: Wingefeld to Gestapo Darmstadt and Landräte in Hesse, June 28, 1941.
[117] BA R 49/73/51: Hetzell to Landesbauernschaften, July 29, 1941.

unfortunates were dumped at a large reservation outside Požega in eastern Croatia.[118] Starting in early July, SS security forces in Upper Carniola also evicted thousands of residents from the districts north of Ljubljana and placed them in detention centers in Šentvid and Begunje before sending them on to Serbia.[119] Altogether, between April and October 1941, the Nazis expelled at least seventeen thousand people from the occupied Slovenian territories to the interior of Yugoslavia.[120] These deportations encountered many of the same problems that had plagued expulsions from western Poland. First of all, the resettlement staffs failed to meet their quotas – in the case of the second wave in Lower Styria, by nearly fifteen thousand people – because vehicles, rolling stock, and gasoline were in limited supply, especially after the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union that June. Transportation difficulties initially prevented the SS from sending "racially valuable" Slovenes to Germany.[121] In addition, many inhabitants fled from their homes before the resettlement squads arrived, obliging an already overstretched police force to hunt them down over miles of arduous mountain terrain.[122] Economic prerogatives also soon rose to the fore, as Uiberreither and Kutschera realized that large-scale expulsions deprived them of much-needed industrial manpower.[123] Authorities on the receiving end, moreover, were none too thrilled about such a huge forced migration into their respective dominions. In Croatia, the infamous Ustaša regime initially deported native Serbs to make way for incoming Slovenes; when the German military governor of Serbia refused to take any more, the Croats began killing them instead. When this too proved inadequate, they sealed the border with Lower Styria and Upper Carniola and likewise declined to accept further convoys.[124] Most critically, the deportations triggered the formation of an active paramilitary resistance movement – one of the first in Nazi-occupied Europe.[125]

All of these factors conspired to bring about an alteration of policy in the autumn of 1941. With Serbia and Croatia now closed off, there was only one place to move the evacuees: Germany. In an arrangement similar to the one he worked out with Greiser in the Warthegau, the Reichsführer-SS agreed to take "politically hostile" Slovenes off of Uiberreither's hands.[126] Following this agreement, between December 7, 1941 and May 18, 1942 the resettlement staffs shipped 194 re-Germanizables in seven

[118] Seftschnig to RKF Staff Main Office, October 1, 1941, in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus in Jugoslawien, Griechenland, Albanien, Italien und Ungarn 1941-1945*, ed. Martin Seckendorf (Berlin: Hüthig, 1992), Doc. 46. Also see the reports composed by Dr. Pero Damjanović of the Institute for Contemporary History in Belgrade, which can be located in ITS 1.2.7.23.7-8.

[119] See the testimony of Dr. Helmut Glaser, July 15, 1947, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 323.

[120] Tone Ferenc, "'Absiedler'. Slowenen zwischen 'Eindeutschung' und Arbeitseinsatz," in *Europa und der "Reichseinsatz". Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938-1945*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (Essen: Klartext, 1991), 201.

[121] BA R 49/70/35-37: Greifelt to HSSPFs, June 9, 1941.

[122] Seftschnig to Fähndrich, October 1, 1941, in Seckendorf, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 46.

[123] See the Himmler ordinances 45/I and 46/I from September 4 and August 25, 1941 in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 115 and Doc. 116.

[124] Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 204.

[125] Ferenc, "Absiedler," 201.

[126] Fleischmann, "Vermerk zur Besprechung über die Aussiedlung von Slowenen," September 1, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 124.

transports to Schelklingen bei Ulm.[127] These families made up only a tiny fraction of the thirty-seven thousand Slovenes the Nazis deported to the Reich during a third wave of expulsions from October 23, 1941 to July 30, 1942.[128] To oversee this initiative, Greifelt sent in another of his young rising stars, Kurt Hintze, who had previously supervised "evacuations" from Danzig-West Prussia.[129] Given the housing shortage in the Reich, he also solicited the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle to prepare holding camps for inbound Slovenes in Lower Silesia, Brandenburg, Thuringia, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria – much like the ones they had already established for ethnic German Umsiedler from Eastern Europe.[130]

Despite a change in leadership – Kutschera was replaced in November 1941 by Dr. Friedrich Rainer – the deportations resumed in Upper Carniola as well, and here too they targeted "members of racial value-groups I and II" whom the SD regarded as a menace to ethnic-political security.[131] This operation eventually crept north of the pre-war Austrian border as well, ensnaring some three hundred Slovenian families (approximately 1,300 people) living near Klagenfurt and Völkermarkt, even though they were German citizens.[132] Between September 1941 and May 1942, the number of deportees from Upper Carniola and southern Carinthia increased by about twenty-four thousand.[133] The number of partisans grew as well, to such an extent that even Himmler came to appreciate the danger and suspended all further large-scale "evacuations."[134] The "hunt for good blood" in Slovenia did not end there, however, for the Gauleiter had made membership in the Styrian Home League and the Carinthian People's League contingent upon a racial examination. In other words, the Eignungsprüfer attained a mandate to screen not just "evacuees," but the population at large, and with it the right to determine who deserved provisional German citizenship (something they enjoyed in the Protectorate yet never fully achieved in Poland). Between April 1941 and August 1943, a team of around twenty-five inspectors evaluated no less than 550,000 people – at an average of between 650 and 750 per day – 96 percent of whom gained a favorable verdict.[135] Tone Ferenc, the most knowledgeable scholar of the German occupation of Slovenia, is thus

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[127] Seftschnig to Petri, December 11, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 185. See the fourth footnote for this document.

[128] BA R 43-II/1411a/411-415: Himmler to Hitler, January 20, 1943.

[129] See the personnel files on Kurt Hintze in BDC SSO/100A. Also see Hintze to Hildebrandt, November 11, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 170.

[130] BA R 49/73/80-84: Greifelt to Lorenz, Heydrich, Hofmann, Dongus, Seldte, and HSSPFs, December 1, 1941. Also see Martin Grasmannsdorf, *Umsiedlungslager der Volksdeutschen Mittelstelle im Gau Württemberg-Hohenzollern 1940-1945. Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013).

[131] Himmler, "Anordnung 46/I," August 25, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 116.

[132] Michael Koschat, "Die Deportation slowenischer Familien im April 1942. Vorgeschichte, Verlauf, Erinnerung," in *Als Kärnten seine eigenen Kinder deportierte. Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-1945*, ed. Johannes W. Schaschl (Klagenfurt: Hermagora, 2012), 37-39. Also see Brigitte Entner, "Deportation" in Malle, *Die Vertreibung*, 174-176.

[133] See the testimony of Dr. Helmut Glaser, July 15, 1947, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 323.

[134] Uiberreither, "Kundmachung über die Beendigung der Um- und Aussiedlungen in der Untersteiermark," August 12, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 248.

[135] Volkenborn, "Bericht über die politischen und rassischen Untersuchungen der Bevölkerung des Miesstales," May 4, 1941, quoted from Tone Ferenc, "Quellen zur 'rassischen Untersuchungen von Slowenen unter der deutschen Okkupation," in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 145-151. Also see Steindl to Laforce, October 14, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 154; Koch, "Bericht über die Ergebnisse der rassischen Bewertung der Bevölkerung in den besetzten Gebieten

quite correct in arguing that what occurred there was unique: in no other country did the Nazis subject such a high proportion of the populace to racial classification.[136] By late November 1942, some 416,000 Lower Styrians had been awarded "conditional state subjecthood" – just over 78 percent of all inhabitants – while in Upper Carniola the final tally stood well above one hundred thousand.[137]

At first, all of the Slovenes whom the SS deported to Germany lived under the direct oversight of the state, dispersed across some 340 resettlement camps run by the VoMi.[138] In April 1942 there were twenty-three of these "Slovene camps" in Baden alone, mainly former convents and monasteries, housing a total of 4,868 people.[139] At that time, however, it was still unclear how many of these people truly belonged in the WED – a result of the confusion and chaos that characterized the "evacuations" of the previous year. In Lower Styria, the Eignungsprüfer had identified 7,785 re-Germanizables and in Upper Carniola the number ranged between three and four thousand.[140] Yet beyond these so-called A-cases (for Absiedler, literally "the de-localized"), there were "USt-cases" (for Untersteiermark; natives with a racial grade of RuS-III who lived in areas staked out for ethnic Germans) and "E-cases" (for evacuation; "racial aliens" [RuS-IV], though some were "politically hostile" RuS-IIIs).[141] To complicate matters further, many subjects had only passed a "rough selection" and others had not undergone a racial examination at all.[142] On May 18, 1942, therefore, Himmler commanded the RuSHA to categorize the inmates of the "Slovene camps" – many for a second time. The Eignungsprüfer had already begun testing the "E-cases" in February, but Himmler felt they were being too strict, reasoning that "most of the Slovenes, who are a very orderly and clean people, can be Germanized."[143] Those who did not make the cut, on the other hand, would join the millions of other foreign forced laborers relegated to helotry.

In keeping with the logic of the "hunt for good blood," an individual's political attitude did not influence the final ruling; the SS enrolled ostensibly anti-German Slovenes into the WED "in spite of their continued resistance."[144] Yet as with their Polish counterparts, the geographical distribution of the Slovenes reflected an overarching security rationale that associated contact with other "ethnic aliens" as

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Kärntens und Krains," November 18, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 177; Obersteiner to Hildebrandt, August 23, 1943, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 315.

[136] Ferenc, "Quellen zur rassischen Untersuchungen," 131.

[137] Andrej Pančur, "Genocide and Ethnocide: Similarities between Jewish and Slovenian Victimization in Slovenia," in *Eradicating Differences: The Treatment of Minorities in Nazi-Dominated Europe*, ed. Anton Weiss-Wendt (Newcastle: Camridge Scholars, 2010), 176.

[138] See the list of these camps in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 319-327.

[139] BA R 59/103/9: VoMi Einsatzführung Baden, "Verzeichnis der Slowenenlager," April 9, 1942.

[140] For Lower Styria, see the footnote for Document 76 in Ferenc, *Quellen.* For Upper Carniola, see the testimony of Dr. Helmut Glaser in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 323.

[141] Stier to Fähndrich, November 3, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 171.

[142] R 69/379/15f: Portmann to Hennefarth, April 17, 1943; BA R 69/379/24-30: Schapmeier to Ramin, May 12, 1942. Also see the testimonies of Hans Ehlich and Hans Klingsporn and in LOC/NMT, 891-893, 906-910.

[143] LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942; Himmler to Greifelt, May 18, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 222.

[144] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942; BA R 59/106/ 11: Blatner to VoMi Kreisführer and Lagerführer in Bavaria, April 30, 1942.

an impediment to assimilation. First and foremost, they were not allowed to settle in Austria, though Himmler also proscribed zones in Germany on a sub-regional level, such as Grünberg, Glogau, Fraustadt, Militsch, Gross-Wartenberg, Glatz, and Breslau (all of these towns lay near the border with Poland).[145] He also wanted the Slovenes separated from their "non-Germanizable" compatriots, so the VoMi held the latter in the original intake centers in eastern Germany and moved most of the former to special sites in the western provinces of the country.[146] If members of both groups happened to reside in the same Lager, the commandants segregated them in different wards. Most "non-Germanizable" Slovenes remained either in VoMi facilities or other labor camps.[147] For a slight majority of the Absiedler, those judged to be "racially valuable," the camps were only a temporary stop on the way to placement with a "politically reliable" German host family.[148] So, for instance, one farmer in the Hessian county of Friedberg took in the eight-person Povhe family, and another in nearby Limburg employed three re-Germanizable Slovenes from Artiče and Nova Sela.[149] As of October 1943, the EWZ counted a total of 15,532 Slovenian WED candidates, 8,158 living in private homes, 7,374 in the camps.[150] After the Poles, they represented the second largest national cohort within the Re-Germanization Procedure.

Although the SS did not instruct re-Germanizable Slovenes to write letters detailing their experiences, as they did with the Poles, it is still possible to recreate what their daily lives were like based on eyewitness accounts, postwar interviews, and police surveillance reports. It seems that those quartered outside the camps tried to keep their heads down and avoid trouble, even if that meant voicing support for the German cause. The mayor of Elz reported that the behavior and political attitude of the Kremzer family, for example, were "impeccable."[151] Others did not hide their homesickness or their relationships with "racially inferior" Slovenes. Police officers in the Rhineland were dismayed to learn that so many candidates sought permission to travel back to Slovenia, and Stier thought it prudent to remind the VoMi that "interactions between Germanizables and non-Germanizables must be prohibited as sternly as possible."[152] Despite the best efforts of the RKF Staff Main Office to employ them as skilled laborers in industrial firms, most "racially valuable" Slovenes ended up on farms, though some served in artisanal

[145] BA R 49/73/35-37: Greifelt to HSSPFs, June 9, 1941; BA R 49/73/92: Himmler, "Anordnung 65," January 26, 1942.

[146] BA R 49/73/70-72: Creutz to Lorenz, Ehlich, Seldte, and Hofmann, October 23, 1941. Also see Ferenc, "Absiedler," 204.

[147] Stier to Brandt, November 16, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 276.

[148] BA R 186/11: Himmler, "Anordnung 34/I," June 4, 1941.

[149] ITS 3.3.1.1.65/82254959: Kreisbauernführer Friedberg to Waldeck, November 14, 1942; HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 987: "Nachweisung über die im Kreise Limburg eingesetzten Wiedereindeutschungsfähigen," unsigned, undated.

[150] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

[151] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1080: Bürgermeister Elz to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, May 10, 1944.

[152] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1081: Stroop to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, August 2, 1044; BA R 59/57/36: Stier to Lorenz, April 1, 1943.

trades and many of the young women worked as domestic servants and office clerks.[153] German employers were apparently quite satisfied with their performance, even though very few found a job in their previous occupation.[154] The authorities usually reneged on their promise of compensation for property left behind in Slovenia, yet this offered little solace to many even when they did follow through. Alojz Zorko's father scoffed at the idea of accepting 300 RM in exchange for the farm he had to abandon: "He said he would not forsake the Slovenian soil for a couple of marks."[155] Those who lived in the VoMi camps could not afford to be so noble; they had to rely on shipments of clothing, shoes, and blankets that had once belonged to other human beings.[156] Johannes Čemer-Schaschl, for instance, openly disclosed that he had "worn the clothes of murdered Jews."[157]

Everyday life in the camps differed in other ways as well. Generalizations are difficult to make because conditions varied from camp to camp and largely depended on the personality of the commandant. For the most part Slovenian WED candidates could expect relatively fair treatment – so long as they cooperated.[158] "The re-Germanizable Wends… should be treated better than the Slovenes in every respect," one Gestapo officer emphasized.[159] In practice, however, SS personnel often conflated the two groups, particularly in facilities situated in the eastern sections of the Reich like Saxony and Lower Silesia, where the EWZ recorded far more complaints than they did in the west.[160] Even in many of the so-called Germanization camps, VoMi personnel kept the Slovenes on a very tight leash, instituting the same strict regimen of control they had already systematized for ethnic German resettlers. They tried to sequester internees from the outside world by censoring their correspondence and tightly regulating entry to and exit from the camps, even going so far as to bar "outside persons" and ban visits between Absiedler from neighboring areas.[161] All of these measures once again convey the atmosphere of extreme paranoia in which re-Germanization took place; the race and resettlement experts feared that any connection with fellow Slovenes, even the "racially valuable" ones, might instill a "liberation ideology" that would blight their "ethnomorphosis" and lead to political unrest.[162] In spite of these restrictions, many candidates were

[153] BA R 49/73/70-72: Creutz to Lorenz, Ehlich, Seldte, and Hofmann, October 23, 1941; BA R 49/73/80-84: Greifelt to Lorenz, Heydrich, Hofmann, Dongus, Seldte, and HSSPFs, December 1, 1941; BA R 49/73/124-125: Bethge to Hofmann, Dongus, and HSSPFs, April 23, 1942.

[154] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

[155] See the testimony of Alojz Zorko in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 183.

[156] BA R 59/103/14: VoMi Einsatzführung Baden, "Aufstellung über Zuteilung an Kleidungsstücken," undated.

[157] Johannes W. Schaschl, "Als Kärnten seine eigenen Kinder deportierte," in Schaschl, *Als Kärnten*, 142.

[158] NARA T-81/277/2397415-416: Greifelt to Berkelmann, June 9, 1941; NARA T-81/307/2435243: Gradmann to Malsen, March 2, 1943. Also see Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 199.

[159] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 995: Gabbusch to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, September 30, 1942.

[160] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

[161] BA R 59/106/13: Blatner to VoMi Kreisführer and Lagerführer in Bavaria, May 21, 1942; BA R 59/106/18: Blatner to VoMi Kreisführer and Lagerführer in Bavaria, October 21, 1942

[162] Ferenc, "Absiedler," 206.

at least able to acclimate to what Čemer-Schaschl described as "enforced normality," though he too felt the angst that consumed most inmates of the VoMi camps.[163] So did Tone Kristan, who recalled his parents' apprehension as follows: "They did not know what would become of us. The war went on and we had to spend this difficult time in the most miserable circumstances." Others simply could not comprehend the seemingly contradictory machinations of their Nazi overlords: "If they want to Germanize us," Alojz-Slavko Kunej wondered, "then why would they deport us?"[164]

A report composed by one high-ranking EWZ official in October 1943 offers a revealing portrait of the general mood among re-Germanizable Slovenes both inside and outside of the camps. According to him, the results of the program definitely warranted a positive outlook: although most people seemed indifferent, they were nevertheless compliant and could "gradually be Germanized over the course of the years." "With other families" who were "prepared to remain in the Old Reich," he observed, the Germanization process was "already almost complete." While there is good reason to question the veracity of these statements, we cannot dismiss them out of hand. Many candidates undoubtedly deduced that acquiescence would bring material advantages and a more comfortable existence, and more than a few of them acted out of political or ideological sympathy with the Nazis or truly believed themselves to be German (the same could be said in regard to the many of Slovenes who joined the Styrian Home League and the Carinthian People's League). However, the report mentioned something else: "We must not forget that these people – in contrast to the resettlers – were removed from their old homeland against their will. As a consequence, the Slovenes regularly express a burning desire to return to their old homeland. "[165] In fact, the ethnic German Umsiedler did not really have much of a say in their relocation either, but the comment does underscore an important point of distinction. Although the enrollment of Polish WED candidates always relied heavily on coercion, they could usually still exercise the option to stay in Poland (albeit as paupers). The Slovenes did not possess even this modicum of volition – unless they joined the insurgency, which hardly afforded better chances of survival. While some may have communicated a desire to enter the German "ethnic community," most of them just wanted to go home.

The Reichsführer-SS had another destination in mind: occupied Poland. Already in May 1941, when the deportations in Slovenia first kicked into gear, Fähndrich had informed his colleagues in Bled of a plan "to reserve these people for colonization as peasants in the German East at a future point in time."[166] By the spring of 1942, Himmler had set his sights on the Polish district of Lublin in the General Government, the region he envisioned as a bridge linking settlements in the incorporated eastern

[163] Schaschl, "Als Kärnten seine eigenen Kinder deportierte," 124, 133.

[164] See the testimonies of Tone Kristan and Alojz-Slavko Kunej in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 289, 277.

[165] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

[166] Fähndrich to Maier-Kaibitsch, May 22, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 66.

territories to proposed German outposts farther east in the Soviet Union. Stier visited the area that summer to begin concrete preparations, though the project did not get underway until the fall, when Himmler contacted Greifelt from Kraków on October 4, 1942 and ordered him to start moving groups of "colonizable" Slovenes to Lublin before Christmas. Odilo Globocnik, the murderous SS and Police Leader in Lublin, confirmed several weeks later that he could absorb around five thousand subjects as a baseline; alongside Volksdeutsche from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, they would take over the farms of local Polish and Ukrainian evictees. After meeting with Hintze on November 20, Himmler again pressured Greifelt to get the trains rolling; by December 1, he had organized the transfer of two hundred Slovenian families to Łódź – the presumptive springboard for the operation – and though a further 957 Slovenes arrived in the spring of 1943, logistical complications precluded additional transports.[167]

Meanwhile, the RuSHA initiated yet another round of examinations in the VoMi camps, this one focused on "non-Germanizable E-cases," in an attempt to boost the number of pioneers for the East. We saw with the "filtration" of ethnic German resettlers in 1939-1940 that SS functionaries were not above diluting their criteria in order to cater to Himmler's grandiose colonial designs; so it was with the Slovenes. Using an innovation that split the category RuS-III into positive and negative rubrics (+/-), the Eignungsprüfer now applied "more generous standards" and enlarged the ranks of WED candidates by over four thousand people. At the RKF Staff Main Office, Willy Bethge clarified the reasoning behind this shift in early 1943: given that over 90 percent of the population in Slovenia had obtained recognition as Germans, "it became apparent that the organs of the RFSS applied overly strict standards during the determination of the E-cases."[168] In another parallel with the Umsiedler, Himmler ordained the naturalization of all re-Germanizable Slovenes through the EWZ – an incentive calculated to stimulate enthusiasm for their anticipated resettlement in Lublin.[169] Between February and August 1943, two EWZ teams traveled to camps and households across the Reich, classifying the Slovenes (again) according to "biological value," "ethnic-political attitude," and "social worth." Basing their decisions in part on behavioral reports compiled by civilian employers and camp personnel, they bestowed "conditional state subjecthood" upon 13,253 people and declared them "capable of deployment in the East."[170]

In the end, however, the project never got off the ground, not least because, beyond the technical obstacles involved, many of the race and resettlement experts opposed it. Himmler's scheme, as Günther

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[167] BA R 49/657/14: "Tagesbefehl des Stabshauptamtes," unsigned, July 14, 1942; NARA T-175/73/2590437: Himmler to Greifelt, October 4, 1942; NARA T-175/73/1: Globocnik to Greifelt, October 21, 1942; Brandt to Greifelt, November 20, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 279.

[168] BA R 59/57/ 9-11: "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung beim RMdI über die Verleihung der deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf an Slowenenabsiedler aus der Untersteiermark," unsigned, January 6, 1943.

[169] BA R 59/57/1: Himmler, "Anordnung 19/I," December 15, 1942.

[170] BA R 59/57/3-4: "Vermerk über die Sitzung im Stabshauptamt betr. Einbürgerung und Durchschleusung der abgesiedelten eindeutschungsfähigen Slowenen," unsigned, January 12, 1943. Also see NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

Stier noted, entailed removing laborers, many of them irreplaceable, from thousands of private homes and businesses – a politically risky venture even if one ignored the deleterious effects it would have on the German war economy. There were also still forty-one thousand ethnic German Umsiedler wasting away in the VoMi camps in Poland whose accommodation he considered "more exigent." Above all, he pointed out that colonizing the Slovenes in Lublin would contradict a cardinal tenet of Nazi ethnic policy: that re-Germanization could only succeed in "purely German surroundings."[171] What is truly remarkable is that Stier and his colleagues substantiated their objections with reference to the attitudes of the Slovenes themselves. Dreading what awaited them in the East, the Absiedler had launched a spontaneous campaign of passive resistance. They refused to assume ownership over the homes of Polish and Ukrainian deportees. They complained about the climate in Poland, saying that it was too cold, not mountainous enough for their liking, and incapable of sustaining the vineyards and orchards through which they had customarily earned their livelihood. They tried to manipulate the EWZ "filtration" procedure, thinking it might supply a ticket back home, by declaring that they would rather renounce all claims to restitution and return to Slovenia than "work as slaves" in Lublin, or that they would gladly become citizens of the Greater German Reich – if they could do so in their native land. They also gave false answers to the commissioners in the hope of at least being able to remain in Germany.[172] Defiance came even from within Himmler's own household, when one Slovenian girl named Zwetko who worked there as a maid begged him not to send her family to Lublin, swearing that they were happy where they were.[173]

The race and resettlement experts of the SS had intimate knowledge of these sentiments. One disappointed EWZ official lamented that "Nearly all of the Slovenes reject colonization in the East, which they view as something akin to 'banishment to Siberia.' They do not understand that colonization in the East is meant as an honor for them."[174] Others began to worry that the Slovenes would endanger the security situation in Lublin. The head of one EWZ commission counseled that placing them there would be a "gross ethnic-political mistake," since their hostility toward ethnic Germans rivaled that of the Poles.[175] Another leading EWZ deputy warned Ehlich to expect "serious resistance": "It would not be surprising, as one hears regularly, if the Slovenes formed a complement to the partisans in District Lublin."[176] These fears were certainly not allayed by Himmler's proclamation that "those Absiedler who have behaved in an extremely anti-German manner in the former Yugoslavian state should also be

[171] Stier to Brandt, November 16, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 276.
[172] NARA T-81/307/2435243: Gradmann to Malsen, March 2, 1943; BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943. March 25, 1943.
[173] Stier to Greifelt, March 3, 1943, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 306.
[174]NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.
[175] BA R 69/379/22f: Backofen to Malsen, May 9, 1943.
[176] NARA T-81/307/2435243: Gradmann to Malsen, March 2, 1943.

obtained for settlement in the East."[177] In the face of such strident opposition, however, even the Reichsführer-SS had to relent. In May 1943, at Stier's suggestion, he decided "in the interest of the mood among the Slovenes" to "refrain from a forced migration" and permit them to stay in the Reich if they so chose.[178] Despite their seemingly helpless predicament, Slovenian WED candidates had successfully engendered a policy reversal. Although it is unclear how many people from this group (if any) actually became colonists in Lublin, the amount would have been negligible.[179] Under the weight of popular opinion, Himmler's grand resettlement venture collapsed like a house of cards.

Fortunately for him, the Slavic lands of Central Europe were not the only theater in the Nazis' quest to uncover "lost German blood"; in fact, they had begun searching for it in Western Europe even before they moved on Yugoslavia. Here too, after all, lay provinces the Allies had severed from German rule in the wake of the First World War, along with a majority of German-speakers who thereafter lived under foreign domination and cultural persecution. The plight of ethnic Germans in the Sudetenland did not stir up that much public outcry until 1938, and the return of Lower Styria and Upper Carniola had always been a peculiarly Austrian obsession. In Germany proper, neither issue evoked nearly the same resonance as the fate of Alsace-Lorraine. Taken from the French in 1871 and ceded back to them in 1919, this region was another lodestone on the mental map of interwar German revanchism. Just as nationalist academics created *Ostforschung* to press their territorial claims in Poland, so they developed the field of *Westforschung* to promulgate the same message vis-à-vis the "lost" provinces in France.[180]

As per usual, Nazi ambitions went far beyond a mere revision of the borders drawn at Versailles. The renowned medievalist Frank Petri, for example, contended that indigenes from Wallonian Belgium through to the Paris basin possessed "a very significant proportion of Teutonic and north German bloodlines."[181] In a memorandum dated September 23, 1940, Otto Reche asserted that France as a whole contained a large share of "biologically superior specimens." He counted Normandy among the lands that "Nordic men had already colonized during the Neolithic period," its "racial composition" strengthened by the subsequent migrations of Saxons and Vikings during the early Middle Ages. Whereas the people of Artois and Picardie were "for the most part descendants of Germanic Franks," Brittany likewise housed "significant Nordic elements" that had "provided excellent human material for the French navy." Memories of the First World War and its aftermath were also fresh in Reche's mind; given that the British and French had provoked widespread fears of race war and demographic inundation when they deployed

[177] BA R 59/57/ 9-11: "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung beim RMdI über die Verleihung der deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf an Slowenenabsiedler aus der Untersteiermark," unsigned, January 6, 1943.

[178] Stier to Greifelt, December 14, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 284; BA R 49/73/163: Hintze to HSSPFs, June 9, 1943.

[179] Ferenc, "Quellen zur rassischen Untersuchungen," 208.

[180] See Hans Derks, *Deutsche Westforschung. Ideologie und Praxis im 20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlags-Anstalt, 2001).

[181] Longerich, *Himmler*, 608.

non-European units on the Western Front (and in the postwar German Ruhr), it was hardly unusual that he stressed the danger posed to the "racial constitution" of "German-blooded" groups by "natives from the African and Asiatic colonies." He therefore called upon his government to "extract this material from France."[182] Intellectuals were not the only ones spouting these kinds of ideas either. On June 14, 1940, the same day German troops marched into Paris, Wilhelm Stuckart advocated a platform for releasing "healthy racial elements" from the rural départements as a means of weakening the grip of "Parisian France." In his view, the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, when coupled with "a systematic settlement and ethnic policy in the West," would "finally decide the thousand-year struggle over the Rhine in favor of the German people."[183] Himmler also supported this approach; in September 1940, at a speech in Metz (the capitol of Lorraine), he declared it to be the duty of the Germans to regain "good blood" from all the nations of Western Europe: "We must take it for ourselves. The others may have none ."[184]

The race and resettlement experts of the SS were soon busy organizing the "systematic settlement and ethnic policy" heralded by Stuckart. Ehlich met with Fähndrich in August to discuss resettling an estimated 1.6 million residents of France and the Low Countries to the Reich and Germanizing them there – if necessary by force.[185] That same month, the RuSHA erected an outpost in Metz. Bruno K. Schultz and six other Eignungsprüfer arrived in October and began performing racial examinations on the aggregate of nationalities – French, Belgians, Poles, Russians, Italians, Slovenes – who worked in the mining and industrial conurbation around Thionville, afterwards concluding that "Among these foreigners, who are racially below average for the most part, there is without a doubt also German and Teutonic blood." While most subjects (18,912, or 82 percent) were categorized as RuS-III, with an additional 1,891 (8 percent) labeled as "racially unbearable" as RuS-IV, a total of 2,261 (10 percent) were RuS-II and therefore "suitable for re-Germanization."[186] Judging from these statistics, "racial conditions" in the West were no more or less promising than in East-Central Europe. Like the denizens of other disputed frontier areas, moreover, many native-born inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine clung to a distinctive regional identity that muddled traditional fault lines between Germans and French. Schulz's survey was a preliminary step to "clearing up" this web of national ambivalence by separating the "desirable" from the "undesirable." As Greifelt predicted in November 1940, "the re-Germanization of racially valuable

[182] Reche, "Die Fragen des Nord- und Westraums," September 23, 1940, in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich 1940-1944*, ed. Ludwig Nestler (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990), Doc. 28. Also see Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 55-60, 96-113, 202-229.

[183] Stuckart, "Denkschrift über die Annexion Nord- und Ostfrankreichs," June 14, 1940, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 1.

[184] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 524.

[185] BA R 69/493/60: "Aktenvermerk eines Gespräches von Ehlich und Fähndrich," unsigned, August 13, 1940.

[186] BA R 49/74/8-15: Schultz, "Richtlinien für die Behandlung der fremdstaatlichen und fremdvölkischen Bevölkerung in Lothringen," February 25, 1941.

members of the *Zwischenschicht*" in Poland would soon extend to "the corresponding segments of the population in the newly acquired western territories."[187]

The structure of German rule in Western Europe was almost identical to the one Hitler installed in Yugoslavia and to some extent conformed to a pattern also found in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Lorraine was subsumed into the Saar-Palatinate and together they came to be known as Gau Rhine-Westmark, run by Josef Bürckel, while Alsace joined Baden to form Gau Upper Rhine, governed by Robert Wagner. Gustav Simon, the Gauleiter of Koblenz-Trier (Moselland), took over in nearby Luxembourg. Although the Germans also directly annexed the cantons of Eupen, Malmédy, and Moresnet (which had belonged to Germany before 1919), nearly all of Belgium, along with parts of northern France, fell under the command of the Wehrmacht. The southeast corner of France was divided between the Italians and the collaborationist Vichy regime, with a further zone of military occupation stretching from Paris down the Atlantic coast. In short, the Nazis erected another tripartite geography of governance, with longtime Party leaders from neighboring Gaue appointed as chiefs of civil administration in areas attached to the Reich and the remainder either parceled out to allies or seized by the army. Naturally enough, the borderlands of Alsace-Lorraine became the primary locus of attention. Almost immediately after the collapse of the French Third Republic, Hitler announced his intent to Germanize these provinces on racial and historical grounds and instructed his satraps to act accordingly. Here as well, the cardinal aim of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* was assimilation, once again due to a belief that nearly the entire native population was German in terms of race. In Alsace, Gauleiter Wagner set the tone with the following statement: "When someone comes to me and says, 'I do not doubt what you claim, but I am not a German, I am French, that is, I consider myself French,' I can only repeat: you are not French, you are a German traitor… and today one can no longer betray Germany and go unpunished." That many inhabitants still harbored pro-French leanings only confirmed their Nordic ancestry, since "fidelity is the distinctive quality of the Germans." The NSDAP Kreisleiter of Strasbourg, Hermann Bickler, reiterated this message in an address to his constituents: "For two thousand years your ancestors have lived here in this land… You are German whether you want to be or not. You are German whether you know it or not."[188]

Replicating a strategy that should by now be familiar, Wagner and Bürckel banned the use of French in public, changed the titles of streets, towns, and topographical features, and subjected virtually every civic, professional, and cultural institution to a process of "coordination" (*Gleichschaltung*). They also made naturalization contingent upon membership in the NSDAP or one of its affiliated organs.[189] By

[187] See Greifelt's introduction to Anordnung 17/II in *Der Menscheneinsatz. Grundsätze, Anordnungen und Richtlinien* (Berlin: Hauptabteilung des RKFDV, 1940), 57-59.

[188] Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 199-200. For the quotes from Wagner and Bickler, see Lothar Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsass* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973), 73, 175.

[189] For a concise overview on the similarities of Germanization policy in these different regions, see Alexa Stiller, "Grenzen des 'Deutschen'. Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in Polen, Frankreich und Slowenien," in *Deutschsein als*

September 1940, more than 217,000 residents had enrolled in Lorraine alone. In this way, the Gauleiter sought to overcome the parochial consciousness of Alsatians and Lorrainers, reverse the effects of French "cultural propaganda," and ensure that "the unforgivable mistakes the Kaiserreich will not be repeated."[190] Although surviving documentation indicates a considerable amount of native opposition to these measures, it should not be underestimated how many people genuinely welcomed "re-annexation," particularly in majority Protestant areas. There was no shortage of local notables willing to hold public office, and while some chose to do so reluctantly in order to shield their communities from mistreatment, a fair share of them were self-identifying Germans, true believers in the National Socialist cause, or both. At the same time, in another conspicuous parallel with popular responses to Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* farther east, most Alsatians and Lorrainers who sided with the Germans seem to have viewed submission as the only means of preserving their livelihood, regardless of their actual political attitude. Although collaboration is a heavily loaded term within French historiography on this period, it can be said at the very least that these people reached a form of "passive accommodation" with the Third Reich.[191]

When it came to those who openly turned their backs on Germandom, however, the Gauleiter always reserved the right to apply a "brutal fist." Wagner, for instance, prohibited some fifty thousand ethnic German refugees from coming back to Alsace with the justification that these people had betrayed their national allegiance by fleeing to the interior of France (French authorities had in fact forced many of them to move there after the outbreak of war). He did allow for the release of Alsatian prisoners of war, but only if they signed an affidavit avowing their "German blood descent."[192] Most significantly, the Gauleiter undertook to "cleanse" their territories of all German political opponents, postwar French immigrants, and "racial undesirables." Between July and November 1940, the Nazis expelled 23,790 residents from Alsace to southern France, with the target groups listed as Jews, "Negroes and colored people of mixed race," "Francophiles, members of the patois communities, professional criminals, Gypsies and trouble-makers, alcoholics, the work-shy, pimps, homosexuals, etc."[193] The situation was

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Grenzerfahrung. Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950, eds. Matthias Beer, Deitrich Beyrau, and Cornelia Rauh (Essen: Klartext, 2009), 61-84. On Nazi ethnic policy in Alsace, in addition to Kettenacker, see Elizabeth Knutson and Michael Macqueen, "Regional Identity and German Policy in Alsace, 1940-1944," *Contemporary French Civilization* 18, no. 2 (1994):151-166; David Allen Harvey, *Constructing Class and Nationality in Alsace, 1830-1945* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 194-195; Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 253-291.The literature on the German occupation of Lorraine is much smaller, though a useful (if somewhat outdated) overview can be found in Eberhard Jäckel, *Frankreich in Hitlers Europa. Die Deutsche Frankreichpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966), 123-124.

[190] Kettenacker, *Volkstumspolitik im Elsass*, 75.

[191] Philippe Burrin, *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: New Press, 1996), 291-305; Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania*, 256-257, 263.

[192] See the testimony of Rudolf Creutz in LOC/NMT, 931-934. Also see Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 199-200.

[193] For the figures, see Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 90. The quote is from Kettenacker, *Volkstumspolitik im Elsass*, 252. The term patois referred here to people who spoke nonstandard, regional dialects of French, such as Breton, Picard, and Occitan.

similar in Lorraine, where Gauleiter Bürckel ejected 47,187 people from these categories during the same timeframe.[194]

From Himmler's perspective, there was only one problem with these operations: they occurred without the involvement of his race and resettlement experts. Bürckel in particular was eager to keep the SS at bay. He wanted to replace "unreliable" Lorrainers with farmers from the Saar-Palatinate, and had no interest in importing ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe into his fiefdom or letting the RuSHA determine who among its denizens could stay and who should go. Wagner also favored a policy of internal colonization that relocated "high-grade" peasants from overpopulated areas of Baden into vacated agricultural properties in Alsace.[195] In each case, the Gauleiter predicated their settlement programs on a thorough "cleansing" of "ethnic aliens," irrespective of their "racial value." As Bürckel put it, "There are a number of locales in the questionable zone whose occupants have been fully Frenchified (*französisiert*) over the course of time"; the "pacification" of Lorraine necessitated the removal of such people, and he suggested dumping them in the Warthegau.[196] These objectives, not to mention the "wild" character of the deportations, quickly brought Bürckel into conflict with Himmler's subordinates. The regional HSSPF, Erwin Rösener, observed that "the Gauleiter takes every opportunity to display his aversion to the SS principle of racial selection," and the SD commander reported that Bürckel's cronies had deported not only "racially valuable foreigners," but bonafide, "politically tolerable" Germans.[197] The protests directed at Wagner were somewhat milder, since he at least allowed Gestapo agents to participate in the "evacuations" and exercise a level of discretion, yet they too complained about a limited ability to assess the parentage and "racial value" of Alsatian expellees.[198]

SS functionaries were not the only critics of these unilateral actions, and the brutal approach of the Gauleiter provided them with some unlikely supporters. In reference to the so-called ban of return, Stuckart for one stipulated that administrative officials must treat all Alsatians and Lorrainers "as valuable members of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*." "In the interest of a smooth Germanization," he demanded a halt to "all measures that give them the impression that they are regarded as Frenchmen."[199] The Wehrmacht also voiced support for Himmler's position. The military governor of France, General Carl-Heinrich von Stülpnagel, feared that unregulated expulsions would not only complicate relations with

[194] Ferenc, "Absiedler," 201.

[195] BA R 49/3537/17: Bürckel, "Anordnung über die Zusammensetzung des Arbeitsausschusses für Umsiedlung," December 7, 1940. Also see Uwe Mai, *'Rasse und Raum'. Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 199-201, 221-223, 244-246.

[196] Bürckel, "Aufruf zur Zwangsumsiedlung französischer Staatsbürger," October 1940, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 19.

[197] ITS 1.2.7.17.3/82196427: "Bericht über eine Besprechung mit SIPO/SD betr. Evakuierungen und Volkstumsfragen," unsigned, October 14, 1940. Also see Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, 326-327.

[198] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 309, 318; Kettenacker, *Volkstumspolitik im Elsass*, 251.

[199] Stuckart to Obersten Reichsbehörden, November 5, 1941, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 77.

Vichy, but deliver an "undesirable enhancement to the French body politic."[200] He was most likely inspired to adopt this line of thinking by his administrative chief, Werner Best. A leading figure within the SD before his falling out with Heydrich, Best also protested that the "ban of return" amounted to a catastrophic "waste of Germanic blood" that empowered the French cause with a "racially valuable" leadership class, now imbued with "renegade hate." Just as the National Socialist movement had successfully integrated millions of German leftists during the "time of struggle," he asserted, so it must now "recover" all "enemies of the Reich" with "good blood," regardless of whether they identified as members of a foreign nationality. For Best, casting these people out was tantamount to repeating the mistakes of the past millennium, when "bearers of Germanic blood" had always served as the most vigorous representatives of French imperialism and the most dangerous opponents of Germandom.[201] Stuckart, Stülpnagel, and Best, like Himmler, planned to recall not just refugees from Alsace-Lorraine, but of all "persons of German descent" in France.

Ironically, it was popular opinion, not the maneuvers of their political rivals, which ultimately forced the Gauleiter to accept this point of view. Whether in Baden, the Saar-Palatinate, or elsewhere, most German farmers had no desire whatsoever to pick up and move westwards (or eastwards, for that matter).[202] Because they could not recruit enough colonists from within their own Gaue, Bürckel and Wagner had no alternative to collaboration with the race and resettlement experts of the SS, who had already granted re-Germanization a prominent role in their agenda. On July 30, 1941, Rudolf Creutz at the RKF Staff Main Office called Himmler's attention to some two thousand families in Lorraine who "have to be removed from their present environment and current unfavorable influences in order to win them back for Germandom."[203] That October, Hofmann notified Rösener that RuS-Führer Alois Hornung had begun sweeping the countryside in anticipation of a second round of expulsions.[204] Although inhabitants who had authenticated their German ancestry and registered with local civil servants would remain unmolested, all "questionable cases" reckoned "unfit" would be banished to France, whereas "racially valuable foreigners," as well as ethnic Germans of mixed descent who needed "re-education," would enter the WED. "*Racial selection must be decisive*," Schultz insisted, because such individuals were "often no longer at all aware that through deception they were stranded from the German blood community in a foreign people… For that reason, one must place *less* importance on previous political conduct."[205] Much like the compromise he reached with the Gauleiter in Slovenia, Himmler now brokered

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[200] Kettenacker, *Volkstumspolitik im Elsass*, 253.

[201] Ulrich Herbert, *Best. Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 267-268.

[202] Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, 221-22, 286.

[203] LOC/NMT, 131 [vol. V].

[204] BA NS 2/79/197: Hofmann to Rösener, October 2, 1940.

[205] BAL 14 AR 122/65: Interrogation of Dr. B.K. Schultz, August 1966 [emphasis in original].

a deal "to accept all those people whom Bürckel did not want to have in his area"; in exchange, Bürckel agreed to take in ethnic German resettlers, the first of whom arrived in Metz in December 1941.[206]

Around that same time, a small squad of Eignungsprüfer led by RuS-Führer Fritz Castagne began vetting "ethnically alien laborers" in and around Strasbourg as well, though it seems Wagner defended his prerogatives with more tenacity than Bürckel.[207] He initially commissioned the Nazi Party, not the RuSHA, with the responsibility of weeding out "racially inferior, asocial, or anti-German elements."[208] In an unexpected turn of events, however, the NSDAP leadership soon came to Himmler's aid. Sometime earlier that month, State Secretary Gerhard Klopfer of the Party Chancellery presented Hitler with a version of Best's manifesto and concurred that the safest way to deal with the "unreliable" intelligentsia in Alsace-Lorraine was "to prevent them from providing the French with a new leadership class by virtue of their racial fitness." It would be foolish, he advised, to "give away hundreds of thousands of people to a foreign *Volk* without at least rendering them harmless."[209] Himmler immediately took advantage of this opening. "In regard to your proposition to deport undesirable elements to France," he wrote to Wagner on June 18, "I ask you to consider that under all circumstances we must avoid endowing the French with people of German blood in this way and thereby advancing the rebuilding of the French nation." Instead, Himmler proposed the same deal he had already made with Bürckel: "seriously dangerous elements" could be "rendered harmless through internment for the duration in Reich German concentration camps," while those who "do not need to be rendered harmless, yet whose presence in Alsace is intolerable for political reasons" would go to Germany.[210] Already under pressure from Hitler to remove some 250,000 "Frenchies" (*Franzmänner*) from Alsace, Wagner acceded to the wishes of the Reichsführer-SS.[211] On July 8, 1942, he pledged that he would "no longer allow the expulsion of any Alsatians" who might "improve the racial substance of France." "In the future," he added, "the German-blooded population that is racially valuable, including the patois, will be resettled in the Reich."[212]

Himmler had persuaded the Gauleiter to adopt his scheme for a renewed campaign of ethnic cleansing in the West. With German armies once again on the move, Hitler now linked this undertaking with the colonization of the East. In tandem with the blanket award of "conditional state subjecthood" and the introduction of conscription in Alsace, Lorraine, and Luxembourg in July 1942, the Führer proclaimed his desire to send evacuees from all three of these countries to Germany, the General Government, and

[206] See Stier's testimony in LOC/NMT, 923-931; BA R 69/909/16: Tschierschky to Reichel, December 26, 1941.
[207] BA R 69/642/80: Hofmann to Korsten, December 23, 1941.
[208] Wagner to Himmler, May 19, 1942, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 103.
[209] LOC/NMT, 918-919, Doc. NO-247: Berndt to Wolff (English transcript), May 20, 1942.
[210] Himmler to Wagner, June 18, 1942, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 117.
[211] Ferenc, "Absiedler," 202.
[212] Gädeke to Fischer, July 8, 1942, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 121.

the occupied territories of the Soviet Union.[213] Himmler had already disclosed his intention to settle them in Lublin the previous April.[214] On August 4, Wagner met with RKF representatives (Stier among them) and together they formulated a new deportation procedure. Although the target groups remained basically the same as before, the attendees agreed that "the race question is the one of importance… racially valuable persons will be resettled in Germany proper, whereas the racially inferior will be expelled to France." They also designated the former group with the same term then in use for re-Germanizable Slovenes – Absiedler. HSSPF Kaul convened with Wagner in Karlsruhe a short time later to reaffirm that "All those who have German blood in their veins, yet who cannot be sent to France and cannot be tolerated in Alsace, should be resettled in the Reich – regardless of their political attitude."[215] Hitler approved this same course of action during a summit with Wagner, Bürckel, and Simon on August 9, 1942.[216] On August 23, the Interior Ministry released an Ordinance on Citizenship in Alsace, Lorraine, and Luxembourg that mandated the involvement of the RuSHA in all cases where an applicant could not verify German descent (as with the DVL in Poland). A month later, the same policy went into effect for the Belgian districts of Eupen, Malmédy, and Moresnet.[217] By that point, the race examiners had already started selecting "racially valuable" Alsatians for "settlement in the East" as well as in the Reich.[218] Stier and Bethge came to an understanding with Bürckel's deputy on November 28, 1942 that the SS would deport 9,337 people from Lorraine as well, with the "racially unobjectionable persons" earmarked for the General Government.[219] The exact same thing happened in Luxembourg. When a general strike broke out in September 1942 in response to the onset of conscription, Gauleiter Simon elected to "evacuate" Luxembourgers who participated as a means of eliminating the "pathogen" of political unrest – though not before the Eignungsprüfer had a chance to vet them.[220]

The second wave of deportations in Western Europe began in early 1943. The first transport from Lorraine left Metz on January 18, bound for Bavaria. Between January 20 and 28, another two trains departed for Lower Silesia and the Sudetenland, where VoMi officials distributed their human cargo among twenty-five resettlement camps, many of them already occupied by Slovenes. Shortly afterwards,

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[213] ITS 1.2.7.17.3/82196428-429: Lammers to Himmler, Keitel, Bürckel, Wagner, and Simon, July 22, 1942. Only Wehrmacht soldiers and "otherwise proven Germans" from these countries received unrestricted German citizenship.

[214] Peter Witte et al., eds., *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/1942* (Hamburg: Christians, 1999), 391-392.

[215] LOC/NMT, 912-916, Doc. 1470-PS: "Guidelines for the Treatment of Expelled Alsations" (English transcript) unsigned, August 7, 1942. The reference to Kaul's meeting with Wagner in Karlsruhe comes from a file note composed by a certain Hinrich from the RKF Staff Main Office, which is also included under this document number.

[216] Longerich, *Himmler*, 590.

[217] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1359, Bd. 439: Schultz to Gutenberger, December 8, 1942. Also see Witte et al., *Dienstkalender*, 509-510.

[218] BA NS 2/89/3-6: Schultz, "Aktenvermerk betr. Aufgaben des RuSHA im Westen," September 28, 1942.

[219] LOC/NMT, 916-917, Doc. NO-5211: Ellermeier, "File Memorandum on the Deportation of Lorrainers" (English transcript) December 5, 1942.

[220] Simon, "Richtlinien über Methoden zur Befriedigung des öffentlichen Lebens in Luxemburg," November 6, 1942, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 105. Also see Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Nationaler Selbstaufgabe. Deutsche Besatzungspolitik und Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940-1945* (Fribourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1985).

a further four hundred people arrived at the Lager Mittelsteine in Glatz, though most Absiedler from Lorraine ended up at sites around Erfurt in Thüringia.[221] The Luxembourgers went to Leubus an der Oder, also in Lower Silesia, whereas the Alsatians were sent to the Umsiedlungslager in Schelklingen bei Ulm.[222] Roman Sobkowiak remembered them well: "Within the camp there was a group among the Alsatians that had special status as 'racially pure' people who had opposed the German occupation of Alsace and were therefore deported to the Reich for re-education."[223] The choice of these specific locales once again illuminates the spatial logic behind the re-Germanization process. Residence in the borderlands west of the Rhine was out of the question "for political and ethnic reasons." "The stronger the political incrimination and Francophile attitude of the individual," one memorandum stated, "the farther away their settlement should be."[224] Due to overcrowding in the VoMi camps and the release of inmates to work for independent contractors, this condition did not always hold up in practice, especially during the later stages of the (open-ended) operation. In January 1944, there were 144 re-Germanizables from Lorraine and Luxembourg living in private homes in Westphalia; by June, the number had risen to 353 and included people from Alsace too.[225]

Deportees often underwent racial selection before their transfer to Germany, in some cases, long before. By the time the second wave began, the RuSHA had already developed a sophisticated ground game in the West, with field agencies in Metz, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg City, a regional headquarters located across the border with the office of the HSSPF in Wiesbaden, and two teams of well-trained Eignungsprüfer regularly combing the area.[226] So, for instance, an inspector by the name of Reinhold Ratzeburg traveled to the town of Holler in Luxembourg on December 3, 1943 and screened seventeen families, all of them facing eviction, all but one of which he graded as RuS-II. The next day, he stopped in Luxembourg City to perform assessments at the municipal police barracks.[227] It was far more likely for the SS to expel people to Germany first, however, and let the Eignungsprüfer sort them out later in the VoMi camps.[228] No matter where the examination transpired, "racial phenotype" constituted the most important determinant of the subject's future. And just to make sure that no "alien blood" seeped into the

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[221] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1358, Bd. 81-82: Castagne to Klinger, January 29, 1943.

[222] BA R 49/73/85-86: Greifelt, "Geheimerlass über die Behandlung und den Arbeitseinsatz der abgesiedelten Personen aus Elsass, Lothringen und Luxemburg," October 3, 1942.

[223] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 3-4.

[224] BA R 49/73/169: Hintze to the HSSPFs, September 20, 1943; LOC/NMT, 912-916, Doc. 1470-PS: "Guidelines for the Treatment of Expelled Alsations" (English transcript), unsigned, August 7, 1942.

[225] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 74: Gutenberger to Regierungspräsident Aachen, January 11, 1944; LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 167: "Einsatzliste SS-District West," June 1, 1944.

[226] Matthias Hamann, "Erwünscht und unerwünscht. Die rassenpsychologische Selektion der Ausländer," in *Herrenmensch und Arbeitsvölker. Ausländische Arbeiter und Deutsche 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen August et. al. (Berlin: Rothbuch, 1989), 151-152. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 328.

[227] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1369, Bd. 146-147: Ratzeburg, "Bericht der Dienstreise nach Luxemburg," December 10, 1943.

[228] LOC/NMT, 916-917, Doc. NO-5211: Ellermeier, "File Memorandum on the Deportation of Lorrainers" (English transcript), December 5, 1942.

body politic, the RuSHA (via the EWZ) launched a second round of investigations in the summer of 1943, after the Interior Ministry awarded the possibility of "conditional state subjecthood" to everyone whom the Nazis had deported to the Reich from Western Europe over the course of the previous year.[229] Isabel Heinemann estimates that around thirty thousand people were deported from Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg during this second wave, nearly all of them to Germany. Based on the available sources, it stands to reason that around fifteen thousand of them became WED candidates.[230]

Marie-Louise Zimmermann was one of them. Her father had first come under the scrutiny of the Gestapo in 1941 after requesting a permit to move to France; as a result, he lost his job as a schoolteacher. Herr Zimmermann nevertheless continued to air his pro-French sentiments, and on October 27, 1942 he and his family were arrested for having taken part in a "Francophile demonstration" on Bastille Day. Sixteen years old at the time, Marie-Louise recalled the event as follows: "It was a foggy autumn day… At six in the morning, three men in squeaky boots appeared on the steps of our home at the boys' school in Bischwiller. With loud knocks they demanded entry: 'Police! Open up!' They laconically told us: 'Dispatch to the Reich.' That was our notification that we would be deported to Germany." Along with other Alsatian expellees, the Zimmermanns journeyed by lorry to Colmar, where an RuSHA inspector analyzed their "racial characteristics": "We stood before him, my mother, my father, and I. These were horrific moments, in which we were measured from head to foot; we had to undress… we felt stripped to the soul. Were we Aryans?" The examiner thought so: although he judged Frau Zimmermann to be RuS-III, Marie-Louise attained the rating RuS-II, as did her father. The next day, they disembarked at the Umsiedlungslager in Schelklingen, which had already become a strange microcosm of Himmler's pan-European community of the racial elite.[231] Although Poles, Slovenes, and Alsatians each lived in separate quarters, camp personnel saw no problem in placing people of different backgrounds in the same compound. As the commandant explained to Marie-Louise, all of the inmates, regardless of national origins and social class, would soon "prove to be capable of Germanization [and] reintegrated into the German ethnic community."[232]

The story of the Zimmermann family, and the treatment of re-Germanizables from Alsace, Lorraine, and Luxembourg more generally, keys us in to a singularity of the "hunt for good blood" in the West. The resettlement program was, first and foremost, a political security measure, and Absiedler from

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[229] BA NS 2/152/128-130: Hildebrandt, "Anordnung über die Verleihung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf an Elsässer, Lothringer und Luxemburger," August 5, 1943.

[230] We know that the SS had sent 12,905 Absiedler to Germany as of March 1943, and there were still 8,500 in the VoMi camps in March 1944, though many re-Germanizables would have been released to private residences by that point; see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 324fn, 328-329, 331-332.

[231] Jörg Martin, "Das Umsiedlungslager Schelklingen 1941-1945" in Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst 51, Ulm und Oberschwaben (Ulm: Verein für Kunst und Altertum, 2000), 232-247.

[232] Marie-Lousie Roth-Zimmermann, *Denk' ich an Schelklingen. Erinnerungen einer Elsässerin an die Zeit im SS-Umsiedlungslager Schelklingen 1942-1945* (Sankt Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2001), 21, 53, 57-58, 114-116, 163-166. Also see Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 53-54.

these lands could not escape the WED if the Nazis selected them for admission. They even concocted an elaborate ruse to draw out those with "German blood." Officials promised to allow deportees to migrate to France, even if the police had already transferred them to Germany; all they had to do was submit a formal application. Yet when they did so, the HSSPFs passed on their entreaties to the responsible Eignungsprüfer. "When deciding whether or not to approve these applications," read one directive, "the racial point of view is also of decisive influence… We must at all costs avoid depriving the German nation of racially valuable ethnic material that would benefit a foreign ethnic entity."[233] In Poland, Bohemia-Moravia, and Slovenia, the race examiners only sometimes accepted people whom they knew to be guilty of "anti-state activity"; by and large, re-Germanizables from these countries did not actually pose any real credible threat to internal stability. In Western Europe, however, the RuSHA concentrated almost exclusively on individuals who did approximate the profile of politically hostile "renegades." This is evident when one looks closely at who the Nazis targeted during the second wave of deportations. According to Stier, Gauleiter Simon and his subordinates in Luxembourg "stated from the very beginning that they would limit themselves to people who had to be deported urgently for police and security reasons."[234] With respect to Alsace-Lorraine, Greifelt and his RKF associates claimed that the Absiedler had proven their antipathy to Germandom by taking part in strikes, refusing to join the armed forces, openly subverting occupation policies, or maintaining connections with the resistance movement. They described them as people who had "entered into relationships with neighboring states" and "actively opposed the ambitions of the Reich since their earliest childhood days."[235]

There was supposed to be a distinction between WED candidates and "evacuees" whose "serious political incrimination" marked them out for internment in a concentration camp.[236] Simon styled the removal of Luxembourgers as something done "for their own education in the spirit and thoughts of Greater Germany"; although "a politically necessary and expedient measure for the security of the ethnic community on the border," it was "not supposed to be a punishment, even if accompanied by hardship."[237] This proviso broke down rather quickly in practice. As early as August 1942, RKF operatives decreed that Alsatians "who are racially valuable but who have already been in a concentration camp due to their grave crimes against Germandom" should be "released and transferred to the Re-Germanization Procedure after the termination of their sentence."[238] The Eignungsprüfer also evaluated

[233] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1358, Bd. 77-78: Berkelmann to Greifelt, April 12, 1943; BA NS 2/152/127: Hildebrandt to Berkelmann and Kaul, July 15, 1943.

[234] See Stier's testimony in LOC/NMT, 924-931.

[235] BA R 49/73/85-86: Greifelt, "Geheimerlass über die Behandlung und den Arbeitseinsatz der abgesiedelten Personen aus Elsass, Lothringen und Luxemburg," October 3, 1942. Also see Ferenc, "Absiedler," 202.

[236] Ferenc, "Absiedler," 202.

[237] LOC/NMT, 661-662.

[238] LOC/NMT, 912-916, Doc. 1470-PS: "Guidelines for the Treatment of Expelled Alsations" (English transcript), unsigned, August 7, 1942. Also see Meyer's memorandum from August 29, 1942 under the same document designation.

inmates of the concentration camp at Hinzert bei Trier, where Simon had dispatched the ringleaders behind the mass strikes of August 1942 along with other dissidents from Luxembourg.[239] This is what happened to Adolf Krieps, a socialist parliamentary deputy with ties to the resistance. Adolf was imprisoned in Hinzert in November 1941, released in June 1942 after obtaining a "favorable" racial verdict, and assigned to work at a hotel in Limburg. Local police officers subsequently criticized his "lifestyle and political behavior" on numerous occasions, with one Gestapo report stating, "Krieps continues to hold fast to his socialist worldview. He rejects the authoritarian state and *völkisch* ideology. His acquaintances are restricted to anti-German elements. His son is currently in a prison camp for the distribution of anti-German leaflets. Krieps himself is suspected of having made these leaflets."[240] In their pursuit of racial-demographic rejuvenation, the National Socialists would not leave behind anyone regarded as a "desirable population increase," even if it meant pacifying the borderlands at the expense of security in the Reich and opening the *Volksgemeinschaft* to people they regarded as traitors.

The same impulse colored the initiative to colonize Absiedler in Eastern Europe. Nazi planners liked to foretell that exposure to life as rugged pioneers in the "wild spaces of the East" would awaken latent bonds of "racial kinship" among these people and mold them into "good Germans," as they joined Volksdeutsche from all over the continent in forming a human barrier against the Slavic Flood.[241] Yet while the Gauleiter shared in these fantasies, for them Hitler's proclamation in July 1942 mainly supplied a pretext to dispose of unwanted subjects. When Wagner suggested using Poland as a dumping ground for "racially inferior" Alsatians, Himmler was highly offended: "I must point out," he wrote to the Gauleiter in June 1942, "that the East is a Germanic colonial sphere reserved solely for superior racial elements."[242] Bürckel had more success. Having obtained permission from the Führer to "plant" some forty thousand "racially valuable" yet "politically unreliable" Lorrainers as colonists in western Ukraine, in August 1942 he enjoined the race and resettlement experts to lend their expertise to this venture. Greifelt and Stier did not hesitate to voice their misgivings that the deportees would in all likelihood spread anti-German attitudes among local Ukrainians and might even collaborate with Soviet partisans. "There must be a difference between punitive measures and Germanization measures," they insisted, and instead recommended interning these people in the concentration camps until they demonstrated their loyalty to Germandom. Himmler later reduced the figure to ten thousand and switched the destination to Lublin, but he otherwise ignored this advice and consented to Bürckel's request. Between February and May 1943,

[239] Albert Pütz, *Das SS-Sonderlager/KZ Hinzert 1940-1945. Das Anklageverfahren gegen Paul Sporrenberg* (Berlin: Lang, 1998), 59. Ratzeburg visited Hinzert in December 1943; see HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1369, Bd. 146-147.

[240] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1143: Personalakte Adolf Krieps, January 1944; ITS 1.0/29091700: ITS Index Card on Adolf Krieps.

[241] Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, 324, 331.

[242] Himmler to Wagner, June 18, 1942, in Nestler, *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, Doc. 117.

the SS oversaw the relocation of over eight thousand Lorrainers to VoMi camps in Germany and the Warthegau, where they would await settlement in eastern Poland.[243]

To be sure, the Reichsführer-SS did worry that a forced exodus of agitators and provocateurs would stir up trouble in Lublin and "give the impression that we see the East as a type of penal colony." For this reason, he ordered that re-Germanizables from Alsace who opposed deployment in Lublin should be exempt, along with members of the Alsatian intelligentsia.[244] But the colonization of Alsatians and Lorrainers in eastern Poland would still continue as planned "to the largest extent possible." With the Luxembourgers, however, Himmler threw caution to the wind. Out of three hundred families from Luxembourg bound for Lublin in November 1942, the index cards for 133 of them stated "intolerable in a frontier district due to anti-German attitude," of which seventy-four were "active political opponents of Germandom." In forty-seven of these cases, the patriarch of the family had either been "placed in a concentration camp on account of political violations" or "sentenced to death and shot for political reasons." Even Globocnik was taken aback by his master's seemingly heedless disregard for the local security situation, raising "the strongest objections against the settlement of these families."[245] Himmler overruled him. "It is hardly shocking that the families from Luxembourg and Lorraine are not convinced Greater German nationalists," he remarked, "but it is clear that they are racially superior and of German blood, even if they have occasionally been corrupted in the past generation."[246]

The Nazis were also pressing forward with the "hunt for good blood" at the opposite end of Europe, in occupied France and Belgium, mainly by introducing techniques already refined elsewhere. To account for around fifteen thousand Polish-Germans who had migrated to these countries from the Ruhr industrial belt after the First World War, they established a branch office of the Deutsche Volksliste in the French town of Douai in early 1943. Yet here, in contrast to the usual modus operandi employed in western Poland, the RuSHA enjoyed almost total authority over admission.[247] This station soon became yet another conduit for bringing "racially valuable ethnic aliens" to Germany; the Eignungsprüfer embedded there were obligated to "report all rejected applicants in racial value groups I and II by list to the RKF," even those "of pure Polish descent," so that Greifelt and his underlings could oversee "their

[243] BA R 49/2611: Stier, "Bericht über Besprechung mit dem RFSS," August 10, 1942; BA R 49/2611: Greifelt to Himmler, August 28, 1942; BA R 49/2612: Stier to Greifelt, September 24, 1942; BA R 49/2615: Stier, "Berucht über die Umsiedlung der Lothringer," May 3, 1943.

[244] BA R 49/73/85-86: Greifelt, "Geheimerlass über die Behandlung und den Arbeitseinsatz der abgesiedelten Personen aus Elsass, Lothringen und Luxemburg," October 3, 1942. Also see Ferenc, "Absiedler," 208-209; Kettenacker, *Volkstumspolitik im Elsass*, 266.

[245] LOC/NMT, 921-922, Doc. NO-2400: Krüger to Himmler (Englisch transcript), November 9, 1942.

[246] NARA T-175/73/2590457: Himmler to Kruger and Greifelt, November 11, 1942.

[247] BA NS 47/49: Brückner, "Niederschrift über die Besprechung betr. Verleihung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit an die Volksdeutschen in Nordfrankreich," March 21, 1943; BA R 69/1313: Gottstein, "Anordnung Nr. 200," April 5, 1943; BA R 49/71/55-56: Globke, "Erlass über die Erfassung der Volksdeutschen in Nordfrankreichs in der DVL," undated.

transfer to the Old Reich and inclusion in the Germanization Procedure."[248] Then, in February 1943, Ehlich and Bethge went further and ordered the withdrawal of all "racially valuable Poles" from Belgium and northern France.[249] By the end of the month, the race examiners had already gone beyond the terms of this assignment and started tracking down former soldiers of the French Foreign Legion, particularly Czechs and Estonians, whom they likewise enrolled into the WED as Absiedler.[250]

Himmler's race and resettlement experts had long since turned their gaze to the indigenous inhabitants of the French heartlands as well. Back in April 1941, the EWZ had set up shop in Paris to take over the naturalization and resettlement of around twenty thousand native Volksdeutsche and refugees from Alsace-Lorraine. and in the course of screening these people the Eignungsprüfer came across a startling amount of French-speaking inhabitants who appeared to be "biologically worthy" despite their denial of having any German ancestry or affiliations. Rather than abandoning such "valuable prospects" to the "treadmill of blood mixing," RuSHA officials suggested that they should instead be "re-won for Germandom."[251] These propositions did not fall on deaf ears. In June 1942, Himmler directed the EWZ to combine the "extraction" of ethnic Germans and "persons of German stock" in northern France into a single framework (the so-called *Westaktion*), with the exception of those living in the military zones of Normandy and the Pas-de-Calais.[252] The race examiners even extended their reach into the unoccupied territories administered by the Vichy regime, their reach stretching as far as the French colonies of Algeria and Tunisia in North Africa.[253] Yet none of this was enough to satisfy Georg Rödel, the RuS-Führer in Paris, who wanted to classify the indigenous French population as a whole. "In terms of race," Rödel contended, "the people are superb, and in no way correspond to what one would expect from the French"; their "Nordic look" and "flawless behavior" purportedly signposted their "racial quality." Rödel framed the question of what to do with these individuals and families in stark binary terms: "I emphasize once again that there is still very, very much good blood among the French people, especially in the north.

[248] BA R 186/1: Malsen, "Vermerk betr. Erfassung und Einbürgerung der Deutschstämmigen Nordfrankreichs," March 25, 1943.

[249] BA R 69/1313: "Vermerk betr. Eingedeutschte und eindeutschungsfähige Polen innerhalb der Umsiedlungsaktion," signature illegible, February 26, 1943; BA NS 47/49: Dongus to Rödel, April 18, 1943.

[250] BA R 186/31: Hintze to HSSPFs, February 19, 1943. Unfortunately we do not know how many legionnaires entered the WED, though apparently they were consistently recruited; see BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," May 18, 1944.

[251] BA NS 2/79/187: Hofmann to Rösener, April 16, 1941. Also see BA R 186/10: Malsen to Sandberger, April 23, 1941; BA R 186/10: Greifelt to Sandberger, May 15, 1941; BA R 186/10: Duckart, "Richtlinien für die Behandlung der Staatsangehörigkeitsverhältnisse der volksdeutschen Rückkehrer aus Frankreich," May 29, 1941.

[252] LOC/NMT, 910-912, Doc. NO-2552: Himmler, "Ordinance on the Resettlement of Persons of German Stock from France" (English transcript), June 18, 1942; BA R 69/1313: Hess, "Durchschleusungsbestimmungen für die Westaktion," June 9, 1942.

[253] BA R 186/10: Malsen, "Vermerk über die Rückführung von deutschen Volkszugehörigen aus dem unbesetzten Frankreich," August 11, 1941; BA R 186/10: Kuprian, "Bericht über Aufenthalt in Algerien und Tunisien," September 4, 1941.

This blood can either become a valuable source of energy for our *Volk*, or become the source of an even more dangerous enemy."[254]

Rödel's flights of fancy are a potent reminder that the Nazis simultaneously perpetuated and radicalized older patterns of ethnic conflict while exploding the nineteenth-century conception of the nation-state so as to replace it with a supranational empire built along racial lines. Germanization policy was the clearest possible manifestation of this goal, a defining signature of the wartime Third Reich, and it almost invariably coincided with strategies of political and cultural repression, large-scale population transfers, and an unparalleled regime of forced labor. In each of our case studies, the application of this model grew out of a localized context, yet also fit within a revolutionary, continent-wide framework of racial-demographic engineering. In each location, Nazi governance was also heavily predicated on the same revisionist mytho-historical claim to foreign lands and peoples. And in all but one of these countries (Czechoslovakia), the Re-Germanization Procedure served as the institutional fulcrum of an elaborate constellation of resettlement projects that shifted people from one part of Europe to another in a vast ethnic shell game. Across the occupied and annexed provinces adjoining the prewar borderlands of Germany, the Nazis strove to efface representations of non-German culture, particularly in areas where inhabitants defied traditional modes of national ascription, and throughout this arc of territory they excluded huge numbers of people for a combination of *völkisch* and racial reasons. Equally as significant, however, we once again encounter the strange phenomenon of a classificatory system in which standards of race offered far more opportunities for inclusion than conventional ethnonational criteria. As we have seen, the many difficulties that plagued the WED did not prevent the expansion of the "hunt for good blood" to new domains; on the contrary, these setbacks fueled a maniacal urge for growth. But they also fed into an increasing sense of frustration among German officials and a resultant willingness to use outright coercion against those who resisted integration into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The wider the Nazis cast their search, the more they feared the potential for subversion on the home front. In this atmosphere of mounting confusion and paranoia, Himmler and his men began to suspect that many WED candidates might not actually be "capable of re-Germanization" after all.

[254] BA NS 47/49: Rödel to Schultz, September 17, 1943.

Chapter Seven: The Exclusion Procedure

"In my opinion, it must soon be definitively decided whether these people are German or not."

–Wilhelm Wagner

"Either we win over the good blood… or we must exterminate this blood."

–Heinrich Himmler

Vinzenz Aubel would not leave his mother behind without a fight. At some point in late 1941 or early 1942, the SS had deported Vinzenz and his family from their home in the small Slovenian village of Dole pri Litiji and interned them in a resettlement camp outside the town of Burghausen in southern Bavaria, where a race inspector from the RuSHA classified them as "suitable for re-Germanization." In January 1943, agents of HSSPF Karl von Eberstein arranged to employ Vinzenz on the estate of a certain Herr Randkofer, who had recently filed an application for re-Germanizable laborers. On the day of his departure, however, something unexpected happened. Vinzenz showed up at the train station with his mother, demanding permission to take her with him. When the camp commandant declined, a scuffle broke out. "It took every effort to restrain the woman," one official noted in a subsequent report, "and in the process Aubel became violent." He "physically assaulted the commandant" and called him "a German dog, among other insults." As the guards dragged him away, Vinzenz cried out to his brothers to avenge him, and his defiance continued after this altercation too. He refused to work for his new boss, and encouraged other farmhands to abstain as well. When Randkofer informed von Eberstein of this "hateful and work-shy behavior," not to mention its "damaging influence on the discipline of other re-Germanizables," the HSSPF immediately ordered the Gestapo to arrest Vinzenz and place him in "intensified police custody."[1]

In 1942 and 1943, the Re-Germanization Procedure began to devour its own, and Vinzenz Aubel was not the only one caught in its jaws. As the tide of the Second World War turned against Germany, and the people involved in the program turned on each other, the WED mutated into a system of violent repression. The present chapter explains how and why this transformation came about. It interrogates the increasing disassociation of WED candidates from German society, the various motives and factors that led ordinary citizens to shun and denounce them, and the shockwaves this sent throughout the corridors of state power in Nazi-occupied Europe. Having previously described the contours of popular engagement with Himmler's project of racial consolidation, we must now delve deeper into the matrix of everyday identity politics under the wartime Third Reich in order to illustrate the path by which local definitions of

[1] BA R 49/3562/2: Eberstein to Randkofer, January 14, 1943; BA R 49/3562/13: Lagerführer Burghausen to Eberstein, January 22, 1943; R 49/3562/18: Eberstein to Gestapo Munich, January 28, 1943.

Germanness and practices of community-building became the basis for a new and far more radical phase of the "hunt for good blood."

It was no secret that re-Germanizable Poles often had a hard time fitting in, and one factor perhaps more than anything else accounted for this difficulty: the language barrier. The absence of a common tongue formed a consistent and often intractable obstacle to integration. It also audibly distinguished these people as members of a foreign nation, leading to embarrassment and public ridicule. "Life in Germany is very bad for those who don't speak German," Aniela Okrzesik observed, "It is maddening… I can't comprehend anything the people say and they can't understand me, so they laugh at me."[2] This inability to communicate verbally also invited the scorn of employers, especially when it came to young women recruited to work as housemaids. "My Hausfrau doesn't understand Polish and doesn't get along with me," Jadwiga Ciupinska rued in August 1941, "so she always shouts at me and will not allow me to speak Polish."[3] The same handicap led to snags when dealing with officialdom. Stanislaus Ciepluch and Felix Jezierski recalled how functionaries at the local Labor Office would not address their grievances because "we do not know the language well and could not explain our situation." Zygmunt Kotlarek wrote that the mayor of his town "rejected me out of hand," adding "That's how it goes for those who don't speak German."[4] Although SS guidelines stated that all conversations should take place in German, the strenuous regimen on most farms left little time to improve one's language skills. Their enforced separation from Polish laborers compounded the problem by taking away potential interlocutors. As Wanda Brzoskowska explained, "It is very difficult for me to learn the German language because there are no Poles here with whom I can practice."[5] The language barrier gave rise to a cycle of mutual alienation; the derision WED candidates faced made it virtually impossible to gain sympathetic friends who would teach them German, which in turn reinforced their estrangement from the community. "I have no companions here at all," Felix Swiatkowski lamented, "and I don't even want to look any more."[6]

Re-Germanizables faced additional forms of ostracism at their workplaces and in their interactions with locals. Despite the prescribed emphasis on fostering a shared *Tischgemeinschaft*, many foremen elected to segregate them during mealtimes. Stanislaus Stanczak grasped the real and symbolic meanings of this separation: "The Poles eat at one table and the Germans eat at another, and they get better food… You told us that we would have the same rights as German workers, but here it is not so."[7] The re-Germanizables often met a chilly response from their German colleagues too, even when they tried to curry favor by adopting Nazified social conventions. Nikolai Fornalczyk recorded the following: "It

[2] 2/20/97: Okrzesik, 12.12.40.
[3] 5/33/17: Ciupinska, 8.24.41.
[4] 5/35/65: Ciepluch and Jezierski, 8.7.42; 5/35/160: Kotlarek, 8.2.43.
[5] 5/33/47: Brzoskowska, undated.
[6] 5/35/122: Swiatkowski, 12.9.42.
[7] 5/31/25-26: Stanczak, 8.7.40.

pains me very much that when I go to work on the farm nobody replies with the 'Heil Hitler' greeting when I give it, as if they don't hear me."[8] Some coworkers were downright hostile toward them. Stanislawa Magdzinska did not hide her consternation with the antagonistic posture of German farmhands in Retzow, and Stanislaus Perdek reported that he and his family were "constantly bullied by the staff" at the Gehsen Brewery in Möhringen. The peasants were also "very irritable," and Stanislaus admitted that he was "afraid of them."[9]

WED candidates were sometimes barred from communal rituals, ceremonies, and festivals as well. In the countryside, prohibitions on attending church services and joining religious congregations crippled their efforts to merge into communities which were already quite insular to begin with.[10] The same could be said of participation in major holidays like Christmas. In December 1940, Katarina Grzeskowiak conveyed her sadness that "there are big parties here these days, but we are not allowed to celebrate them."[11] Something very similar occurred in Mehrow the following year. In accordance with local tradition, municipal authorities had distributed votive candles to each resident before the town's Christmas Eve festivities. One of them, Dr. Ulrich Senf, made sure to get a few extra candles for the re-Germanizable family living under his care, the Jaseks, so that they too, in his words, "could celebrate under the Christmas tree in the German style." Yet this act of generosity provoked the ire of the mayor and the Party Ortsgruppenleiter, who argued that granting Poles such a privilege was totally impermissible. When Senf cited his duty to treat the Jaseks as Germans, they ignored him. He then wrote to Otto Hofmann and asked him to provide "the necessary support for the Germanization process by enlightening these uncooperative persons." The RuSHA chief did just that, informing the Ortsgruppenleiter a short time later that the Jaseks were "capable of re-Germanization" by order of the Reichsführer-SS and therefore had to be "placed on an equal footing with Germans."[12] But such intervention did little to change the fact that many civilians and officials in the provinces viewed the re-Germanizables with a skepticism that bordered on loathing.

Given the aloof and often contemptuous demeanor of Germans, it is little wonder that WED candidates often turned to non-Germans for emotional support and camaraderie. The Jakubowski family in Friedrichshafen, for instance, converted their cottage and its surrounding orchards into a small haven for Polish and Russian forced laborers in the area. Denied the right to hold their own gatherings or visit taverns, here they could relax and enjoy wine, live music, and friendly conversation. Disregarding numerous warnings from their supervisor to suspend these gatherings, the Jakubowskis even began to

[8] 5/35/51: Fornalczyk, 6.28.42. On the importance of this greeting as a means of social recognition, see Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 21-23.

[9] 5/35/146-147: Magdzinska, 4.5.43; 2/20/214: Perdek, 12.2.40.

[10] 3/20a/29: Gowinowska, 1.26.41; 5/32/124: Pol, 7.13.41.

[11] 5/31/83: Grzeskowiak, 12.19.40.

[12] Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 296-297.

convene Sunday meetings where Poles could discuss politics and exchange news about the course of the war.[13] This was certainly not what the Nazis had in mind when they urged re-Germanizables to forge bonds of amity with their neighbors. One SD officer in Stuttgart remarked that it was next to impossible to prevent them from mingling with "pure" Polish laborers; even worse, they sometimes rejected the overtures of Germans and intentionally kept them at arm's length: "One Germanizable has repudiated his special status vis-à-vis other Poles and opened his doors to the other Poles employed at his estate. Another wanted to let a Polish laborer drink from his glass of beer… Another flatly refused to eat at the same table with the family of his employer."[14] But he also noticed that many Poles in Württemberg distanced themselves from the re-Germanizables; having denounced these people as collaborators and traitors, it was they who truly enforced segregation. Indeed, the placement of WED candidates in locations with as few Polish laborers as possible was as much about avoiding conflicts between them as it was about thwarting interactions. The SD in Stuttgart deliberated over one case where a group of Polish employees attacked one of their re-Germanizable coworkers and accused him of being a police informant. Klara Szymczak told of another incident where a Polish boy stole all of her mother's belongings; when the mother went to retrieve them, "the Poles told her that she should go to the Germans if she had been allowed to change into a German."[15]

What we have here is the inevitable consequences on the home front of strategies of divide and rule abroad, a trend that sometimes played into the Nazis' hands by strengthening allegiance to Germandom. Whether they entered into it willingly or not, membership in the Re-Germanization Procedure often meant that people had to burn their bridges and outwardly commit to the racist tenets of National Socialism. Hence Szymczak's assertion to Schwalm that she was "descended from a German family" and her request to live "somewhere where there aren't so many Poles." These tensions sometimes split families right down the middle. Janina Kwapicz implored Künzel in September 1940 to remove her and her siblings from the custody of their "evil stepmother": "She always harasses me, saying that you chose me because of my skull and that it's my fault she is so far from Poland… She looks upon us as murderers… She terrorizes us because she wanted to go to the General Government and you sent her to Germany."[16] Or consider the tale of the siblings Jan and Eugenia Czernik. Working as a forced laborer in Wittenberg, Jan first learned of his sister's defection in the fall of 1941, when an SS functionary showed up and ordered him to mail photos of himself to the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Łódź. Jan refused. Then he wrote to Eugenia and, according to her, "said that he did not want to know me anymore." She did not seek

[13] Christa Tholander, *Fremdarbeiter 1939 bis 1945. Ausländische Arbeitskräfte in der Zeppelin-Stadt Friedrichshafen* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 89-90.

[14] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.

[15] Ibid; 5/32/75: Szymczak, 5.15.41. Also see Annette Schäfer, *Zwangsarbeiter und NS-Rassenpolitik. Russische und polnische Arbeitskräfte in Württemberg 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 178.

[16] 5/31/48-49: J. Kwapicz, 9.15.40.

reconciliation either: "I no longer consider him my brother; to me, he is a foreigner… I have disowned him because he wants to remain a Pole."[17] Yet even when families stuck together, they were still caught in the middle of a pitiless struggle between rival nationalisms; spurned by German and Polish neighbors alike, they often had no one left to turn to but their SS benefactors. Leon Kwapicz encapsulated this sense of dual isolation when he wrote, "We are sad in a foreign land, because we cannot speak German. We have no community… To be sure, there are six Poles here, but they are foreign to us."[18] "To be hated so intensely is agonizing," Stanislaw Musislek bemoaned in a letter to Dongus, "Surely you would also be happy if you were in a foreign land and had a friend. You are our only friend, you and no one else."[19]

The documents they used to identify themselves highlighted this isolated existence. At first, like all foreign laborers in the Reich, re-Germanizable Poles received a so-called foreigner passport, though theirs contained the entry "Nationality undetermined, German?"[20] This was a short-term solution; since foreigner passports were intended for seasonal workers, they only had validity for a set period of time (usually one year), after which the holder could be deported from Germany at will. Local civil servants would obviously have to supply WED candidates with German papers before the expiration date, but the race and resettlement experts of the SS worried that, in Schwalm's words, "de-centralization would bring with it the danger of a 'wild Germanization'" – or rather, that provincial officials would arbitrarily bestow the credentials of racial privilege to people whom the RuSHA had not vetted.[21] To forestall this eventuality, the Reich Security Main Office announced in the spring of 1942 that all re-Germanizables should henceforth obtain special I.D. cards (*Kennkarten*), which could only be distributed by the HSSPFs upon application.[22] In many instances, however, the I.D. cards were backlogged for "technical reasons" or never turned up at all, leaving WED candidates without any means of proving who they were to local authorities, who then had no reason to help them. In the wartime Third Reich, this paperwork could literally mean the difference between life and death, as Zygmunt Urbanski stressed in a message to the Aussenstelle in February 1942: "I am frantically awaiting my passport, because the certificate from last March has expired and anyone could shoot me with impunity."[23] To get around delays, the SS permitted local administrators to hand out certificates stating that "the bearer is recognized as a re-Germanizable person and must be treated as a Reich German," but they soon had to suspend this practice because the certificates were "improperly used on a wide scale" – Schwalm's fear of "wild Germanization" come to life. "Insofar as re-Germanizables encounter difficulties with other agencies," Bethge declared in July 1942, "these agencies must refer to the decrees on re-Germanizables released by the supreme Reich

[17] 5/33/55-56: Czernik, 10.6.41.
[18] 5/31/19: L. Kwapicz, 8.5.40.
[19] 5/35/137-138: Musislek, 1.22.43.
[20] USHMMA 15.015M/4/261/1-2: Höppner to Ehlich and Eichmann, May 10, 1940.
[21] USHMMA 15.021M/6/43/5-6: Schwalm to Greifelt and Hofmann, September 14, 1941.
[22] USHMMA 15.021M/6/43/7: Fähndrich to Schwalm, September 17, 1941.
[23] 5/34/59: Urbanski, 2.27.42.

authorities."[24] That did little to solve the problem. In December 1942, Kurt Hintze noted that many re-Germanizables were still "treated the same as foreign laborers by state offices and agencies."[25]

All of these tactics skirted the real issue at stake: the award of full German citizenship. WED candidates from Western Europe and Slovenia were at least granted "conditional state subjecthood," though this ambivalent status scarcely afforded civic equality. Re-Germanizables Poles lived in an even more precarious juridical netherworld; they remained "protected members," legally disenfranchised second-class citizens, forbidden from entry into the NSDAP and its associations (except the Hitler Youth), unless local Party delegates deemed it "appropriate." Proscription from the political community did come with one decided advantage: males were not required to join the army. Curiously, although candidates from Western Europe and Slovenia technically were eligible for conscription as "conditional state subjects," the SS and the Wehrmacht rarely followed through and almost never put them in the field.[26] Such reluctance to exploit available manpower keys us in to a telling contradiction. While the Nazis did not want to forfeit these men to the enemy camp, they did not trust them enough to let them fight alongside German soldiers, let alone to make them actual citizens of the Reich. In more ways than one, they sabotaged the program through their own misgivings and vacillation, leaving re-Germanizables bereft of the legitimacy that might have facilitated their assimilation into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The implications of this paradox were not lost on Roman Sobkowiak: "We were stateless and had no rights; we were entirely at the disposal of a racist policy that was very difficult for us to comprehend."[27]

Because re-Germanizable Poles lacked the protection of formal citizenship and recourse to the law, German overseers were not under any compelling obligation to treat them equitably. Without material support from the state, their survival depended entirely on the sufferance of their hosts, which was, to say the least, often not forthcoming. For every Betriebsführer who catered to their daily needs, there were just as many who totally disregarded the guidelines laid down by the SS, not to mention the norms of basic human decency. It is important to keep in mind the social impact of wartime economic scarcity and declining living standards. In the scramble for dwindling material resources that bred increased discontent, envy, and backstabbing among the civilian populace as the war dragged on, the re-Germanizables' claim to a share of the pie counted for less and less, if it ever rated at all. The allotment of foodstuffs is a telling gauge of this stratification. It was the Betriebsführer who often controlled the distribution of ration cards, and many withheld them from WED candidates.[28] Those who did have vouchers discovered that their miniscule wages rendered these documents almost worthless, or that

[24] BA R 49/73/129: Bethge to Hofmann, Dongus, and HSSPFs, July 27, 1942.
[25] BA R 186/36/825-826: Hintze to HSSPFs, December 10, 1942.
[26] StS Wü 65/5, T3, Nr. 216: Landrat Biberach to Bürgermeister Biberach, May 6, 1943; BA R 49/73/170: Hintze to HSSPFs, October 8, 1943; BA R 49/73/160: Hintze to HSSPFs, June 1, 1943.
[27] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 53-54, 61-62.
[28] BA R 59/46: Adam to Fähndrich, December 14, 1942.

shopkeepers would not sell them items that fell outside the purview of government regulation.[29] They also lacked the capacity to preserve and prepare food. Ignaz Zolazek had no pantry and no cookware, Marcin Kraska had no cabinets and no eating utensils, and Anton Kalisz had no kitchen appliances whatsoever. [30] Even the simple task of building a fire could not be taken for granted. Nogala Wojciech's employer refused to provide coal or wood, telling her to go to the forests instead, and the Zolazeks were likewise forced to "hack down bushes and burn them in order to cook."[31] Deprived of rudimentary implements like plates, bowls, cups, and cutlery re-Germanizables could hardly display "proper" bourgeois etiquette at the table, and their culinary practices and eating habits made them seem backward and repulsive.[32]

Although they were supposed to receive food as payment in kind, the Betriebsführer often gave them mere scraps or fodder unfit for human consumption. "Sometimes when I ask," Zenobiusz Pol recalled, "the Germans reluctantly hand me a piece of moldy bread. But I don't get it every day, only twice a week."[33] Jan Kania griped that his employer left the family only "a crust of bread," along with "the milk that remains from his meals, in which pieces of bread and potatoes still float."[34] Antoni Pawlak ate what he described as "a kind of soup," while Marcin Kraska spoke of a diet that consisted only of gruel and rotten potatoes.[35] The low calorific intake of such scanty portions naturally made long hours of arduous labor all the more exhausting. "How can we work if we have nothing to eat and cannot buy anything?" Wladyslaw Potasiak asked.[36] One perceptive VoMi official drew attention in late 1942 to the dangerous implications that this inequality spelled for the program's success: "There exists the danger that the persons who are willing to be Germanized will feel rejected if they receive the same food provisions as foreign workers."[37] The physical repercussions, of course were far more serious. Trapped in the lowliest tier of a "nutritional hierarchy," WED candidates in a variety of locations showed signs of severe malnourishment, and more than a few hovered on the brink of starvation. Jan Slowinski and his siblings predicted in August 1940 that they would surely die from hunger before the onset of winter.[38] By December 1942, Wladyslaw Lewandowski had wasted away, in his words, to "nothing but skin and bones."[39] Eating itself became a weapon of torment for the hosts of Jadwiga Ciupinska, who on one occasion denied the girl dinner yet made her watch as they gorged themselves on apples, cakes, and sugar

[29] 5/34/90: Milczarek, 4.10.42; 5/35/23-24: Strzelecki, 6.3.42.
[30] 3/20a/4: Zolazek, 1.3.41; 3/20a/278: Kraska, 12.4.41; 2/20/77: Kalisz, 10.26.41.
[31] 5/35/93: Wojciech, 10.19.42; 3/20a/4: Zolazek, 1.3.41.
[32] 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40.
[33] 5/32/124: Pol, 7.13.42.
[34] 2/20/5: Kania, 11.26.40.
[35] 2/20/15: Pawlak, 10.28.40; 3/20a/278: Kraska, 12.4.41.
[36] 3/20a/113: Potasiak, 6.28.41.
[37] BA R 59/46: Adam to Fähndrich, December 14, 1942.
[38] 2/20/123: Slowinski, 8.40. The term "nutritional hierarchy" comes from Theresia Bauer, *Nationalsozialistische Agrarpolitik und bäuerliches Verhalten im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Eine Regionalstudie zur landlichen Gesellschaft in Bayern* (Bern: Lang, 1996), 165.
[39] 5/35/123: Lewandowski, 12.10.42.

beets.[40] Even more horrific accounts emerged of mothers who could not procure daily bread or milk for their young children and infants.[41]

As if hunger were not enough of a debilitating privation, re-Germanizable Poles also frequently lived in a state of abject squalor, with entire families crammed into dank one-room hovels, exposed to blistering heat in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. Noxious pests and poor sanitation facilities presented an additional hardship. Whereas the Spychalski family struggled to fend off an infestation of mice, the Dudaczyks occupied a shanty that was "full of vermin… vermin crawling around on everything." The Bryczak family had "nowhere to go to the bathroom" because of an inoperative lavatory, while the Pluskotas had to relieve themselves in a chamber pot and a latrine bucket.[42] Yet what made these people stand out most conspicuously was their inability to maintain normal standards of personal hygiene. The Stanczaks could not clean themselves properly "because the farmer has no tub for us and we must make do with a small wash basin," while the Perdeks still had not purchased soap months after their arrival in Möhringen because they had no money and no one would furnish them with the necessary coupons.[43] "I am always so dirty," Murjanna Znajcek confessed, "because even if I want to bathe I have nothing to bathe with."[44] Living in a domicile she likened to a "nasty underground hole," Eleonora Kwasniewska endured a similar ordeal: "We have no soap to wash with and grow foul with excrement."[45] In some cases, the Betriebsführer deliberately kept their re-Germanizable employees mired in filth by explicitly forbidding them from bathing or cleaning their rooms.[46] These sordid circumstances made a mockery of any attempt to exhibit "German order and cleanliness" while intensifying latent associations of dirt with racial stigma and an affront to the symbolic purity of the communal body.[47]

As one can imagine, they wrought devastating physical effects as well. Overworked and underfed, poorly clothed and unsheltered, penniless and wretched, Polish WED candidates began to come down with all manner of illnesses. At first, these were relatively mild: colds, headaches, muscle fatigue, arthritis, trachoma, all were cited continuously in the letters as common infirmities.[48] Others developed skin infections like scabies and worms – highly visible maladies that led German hosts and neighbors to shun them. "Everyone keeps away from us in order to avoid contamination," observed Wincenty Krzewinski, "as if we were mangy dogs."[49] Soon enough, these comparatively minor ailments degenerated into life-threatening diseases (pneumonia and tuberculosis in particular). The symptoms

[40] 5/33/57: Ciupinska, 10.9.41.
[41] 3/20a/8: Bryczak, 1.12.41; 3/20a/273: Tomczak, 12.4.41.
[42] 5/35/84: Spychalski, undated; 5/31/30: Dudaczyk, 8.11.40; 3/20a/8: Bryczak, 1.12.41; 2/20/94: Pluskota, 12.8.40.
[43] 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40; 2/20/214: Perdek, 12.2.40.
[44] 3/20a/269: Znajcek, undated.
[45] 5/32/60: Kwasniewska, 4.20.41.
[46] 3/20a/322: Gazda, undated.
[47] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Penguin, 1970), 48.
[48] 5/35/44: Woch, 7.18.42; 5/35/75: Jeske, 9.10.42; 2/20/126: Siarkowski, 8.40; 2/20/77: Kalisz, 10.26.41.
[49] 2/20/5: Kania, 11.26.40; 5/31/7: Sakwa, 7.21.40; 5/34/25: Krzewinski, 1.21.42.

Marianna Frontczak enumerated in April 1941 were typical: fever, shortness of breath, severe chest pains, and bloody mucus.[50] Even for candidates who managed to stay healthy, the demands of the workplace presented other dangers to bodily well-being. Reports spoke of numerous work-related injuries that left people maimed or crippled. Take the case of Jan Masurek, the chimney-sweep in Esslingen with whom this study began. In addition to sustaining a grievous head wound after falling from a rooftop in the summer of 1942, a further accident rendered him unable to use his left hand.[51] Yet beyond their vulnerability to physical illness and mishaps on the job, re-Germanizable Poles suffered from what modern-day psychiatrists would instantly recognize as depression and social anxiety. Their letters convey an unmistakable sense of psychological strain; thus, in explaining their behavior, the emotional trauma of their experiences must not be overlooked. The Hausgehilfinnen were not the only ones driven to the point of mental collapse. A physician in Giessen, for instance, diagnosed the forester Anton Kegel with "nervous exhaustion" in August 1941, and another doctor in Tünschütz discerned the following March that Wanda Mackowiak's husband was also stricken by a vaguely defined "nerve illness."[52] Nor were the housemaids the only ones who threatened to take their own lives. Suicidal ideation runs like a red thread throughout the letters of individuals from a multitude of social, generational, and occupational backgrounds. For these people, it seems, re-Germanization made life not worth living.

Had officials and civilians in the provinces truly regarded WED candidates as members of their respective communities, they would have at least tried to take care of them when they fell ill. But this usually did not happen. Although SS directives stipulated that re-Germanizables were entitled to the same health insurance and medical treatment as German citizens, state and Party welfare agencies often proved unwilling to comply.[53] In Heiligenstadt, the trustees of the public insurance cooperative (*Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse*, AOK) declined to finance the hospital stay of Kazimierz Bryl in May 1941 on the grounds that he was already sick before his resettlement in Germany.[54] In November 1942, the AOKs in Wirsitz and Zempelburg announced that they would no longer cover healthcare costs for any "stateless person or protected member of Polish ethnicity," even if they were "capable of re-Germanization."[55] The Betriebsführer did not evince much sympathy either; in most cases, they assumed that their employees were merely feigning illness to avoid work. Ludwig Bryczak's wife was accused of insubordination when she failed to show up at her job in January 1941, despite the fact that she had suffered a miscarriage only days before.[56] When Marcel Wawrzyniak's children missed a few days of work the following month due to a bout of yellow fever, the foreman docked his pay, while Jozef Staziak portrayed the temperament of

[50] 2/20/2: Dybowski, 11.21.40; 5/32/52: Frontczak, 4.5.41,
[51] 5/35/70-71: Masurek, 8.25.42.
[52] HStD G 24, Nr. 178: Forstamt Giessen to Sprenger, August 14, 1941; 5/34/75-76: Mackowiak, 3.19.42.
[53] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/15-17: Greifelt to Hofmann, October 9, 1940.
[54] BA R 36/1052/11: Landrat Heiligenstadt to Deutsche Gemeindetag Berlin, May 19, 1941.
[55] BA R 36/1052/45: Landrat Zempelburg to Deutsche Gemeindetag Berlin, November 9, 1942.
[56] 3/20a/8: Bryczak, 1.12.41.

his overseer as follows: "If someone is sick, they don't get any food, because he says they don't want to work… That is what our employer is like. He doesn't care about people at all."[57] Some German supervisors also restricted their access medical attention in order to keep them on as laborers. "We have been infested with all kinds of diseases, yet our boss will not allow us to go to the doctor," wrote Antoni Pawlak, "We cannot go to the hospital even though we have festering sores and scabs all over our bodies."[58] When Franz Drozdzinski sought treatment for an infected hand wound at the municipal hospital in Wohlde, his boss showed up and "made such a racket" that the staff had to release him.[59]

In far too many cases, there was little that could be done to aid the sick, especially the weakest and most susceptible among them: the very old and the very young. One monthly inventory for SS-District Middle listed dozens of elderly WED candidates who had died suddenly from respiratory infections, heart failure, and intestinal disorders. Children were not spared either. From Sadenbeck in Brandenburg, Stanislaus Lapacz reported to the RuSHA on January 20, 1942 that "My children, aged between one and six years old, all sleep in the cold and have all become very sick. One of them has perished and the others are on the verge of death."[60] That same month, Jadwiga Przywecka also notified officials at the Aussenstelle of a deceased child – her daughter Irena, who had succumbed to an undisclosed illness the previous December. All Jadwiga asked of the SS were copies of the photographs the race examiners had taken of Irena during their selection in Łódź, so that she and her husband would "have a token to remember her by." Walter Dongus, chief of the Aussenstelle, consented to this request in an attempt to assuage Jadwiga's bereavement.[61]

Such deplorable conditions naturally raise the question of why so many Germans treated WED candidates so awfully when they were supposed to embrace them as "blood brothers and sisters." It is tempting to conclude that such behavior was simply a manifestation of the deep-seated anti-Slavic prejudices prevalent among virtually every segment of the German population, or at least an unintended consequence of the Nazis' virulently racist propaganda. Some hosts openly admitted that they regarded these people as Poles, pure and simple, and therefore treated them as such. Roman Sobkowiak discerned that many residents in the vicinity of Ulm "hardly distinguished at all between forced laborers and Germanizables."[62] This was undoubtedly true in many other instances as well, and one could certainly make the argument that re-Germanizable Poles suffered in no small measure due to the outrage many Germans felt over the massive wartime importation of East European laborers, the changing ethnic complexion of their communities, and the intensified fear of *Überfremdung* that accompanied these

[57] 3/20a/27: Wawrzyniak, 2.3.41; 5/35/40: Staziak, 7.16.42.
[58] 3/20a/25: Pawlak, 1.19.41.
[59] 3/20a/98: Drozdzinski, 6.22.41.
[60] 5/34/24: Lapacz, 1.20.42.
[61] 5/34/8b: Przywecka, 1.8.42. Also see Dongus' file note on the previous page.
[62] See the testimony of Rosa Hummel in BA 99 US/51490/91. Also see Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 8.

phenomena – in short, due to premonitions of the Slavic Flood. However, there are a number of reasons to refrain from placing all the interpretative weight on everyday racism (pervasive though it was) and equating the bigotry of ordinary Germans with applications of Nazi ideology. The reality on the ground was far more complex. For one thing, discourses of ethnic and racial chauvinism did not inherently predispose hatred toward out-groups at the grassroots level. Fraternization between Germans and Poles was rife despite the Nazis' ceaseless efforts to curb it, which shows that many people remained unreceptive to the state-sponsored image of the Slavic "subhuman." The fact that many WED candidates got along quite well with their neighbors and never criticized their hosts further underscores the point. That does not necessarily mean the more benevolent caretakers accepted their charges as fellow Germans or adopted the racial categories of the SS, though some clearly did. Hofmann did not boast idly when he spoke of farmers in Mecklenburg who commented that these people "do not look at all likes Poles; they look exactly like us."[63] Just as we must account for the diverse motivations that led some individuals to form bonds of fellowship with these people, so we must contemplate a variety of factors when venturing an explanation as to why others committed horrible injustices against them. As we have seen on numerous occasions, many hosts harbored socio-economic and sexual biases that flagrantly undermined the National Socialist vision of an egalitarian "ethnic community" for all "persons of German blood." We must also not forget the salience of old-fashioned provincialism and the profound mistrust many rural communities felt toward outsiders in general. Nor should we discount the likelihood that some overseers became oppressors simply because they exercised an inordinate amount of power over the lives of other human beings. In short, there was no automatic correlation between racism and mistreatment.

With that being said, it is clear that many Germans, state and non-state actors alike, judged WED candidates according to how closely they measured up to conventional markers of ethnonational belonging (language above all), implicitly rejecting the anthropological and eugenic criteria of the SS in favor of a regime of difference based on social and cultural understandings of identity as opposed to physiognomic or hereditary ones. Of course, sometimes popular disdain did take on distinctly biological overtones. Stanislaw Stepniewski, for instance, inferred that his sister and her family were "not treated like Germans by the people in their place of residence" because "at each step their ancestry (*Abstammung*) is called into question."[64] It was also not unknown for civilians to conflate re-Germanizables with groups the Nazis had pegged as "racial enemies" – Jews in particular.[65] But such expressions of antipathy were actually quite rare. German civilians did not need biological concepts to air or act on derogatory and essentialist opinions of "eastern peoples" (*Ostvölker*).

[63] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.
[64] 5/35/15-16: Stepniewski, 5.29.42.
[65] 5/32/124: Pol, 7.13.41.

By contrast, that it was far more common for them to view WED candidates through the prism of stereotypes that long antedated the Third Reich comes across repeatedly, especially the allegation of sloth. So, for instance, a businessman named Friedrich Kersten disparaged the "nonchalant" job performance of the Grzegorz family and called for the authorities to provide a "fundamental clarification about the German conception of work."[66] Although his exertions had supposedly garnered nothing but approbation from East Prussian landowners for years, Siegmund Marchlewski felt his employer thought of him "only as a lazy bastard and so forth."[67] "My boss always says to me 'This is Germany, not Poland; here one must work,'" recalled Jan Bieganski; a German boy in Zorn said the same thing verbatim to Cecylia Smierzchowska.[68] Adam Szadowiak's overseer latched onto another familiar trope when he blamed him for bringing pestilence from Poland, drawing on older renderings of the East as a diseased space.[69] Presumptions about the supposed criminality and barbarism of Slavs also shaded the outlook of ordinary Germans in the provinces. All over Württemberg, the wildest rumors circulated that inmates of the VoMi camps were not "ethnic comrades," but Bolsheviks, murderers, and sadists.[70] In the Thuringian town of Tautendorf, to take another example, Franciszek Urbanski's host brought him before the local magistrate and accused him of slaughtering livestock. "He never questioned me about it," Franciszek assured the RuSHA, "he just considered me guilty from the very beginning."[71] All of these perceptions would certainly fit modern-day definitions of racism (though xenophobia or nativism may be more accurate descriptors). And therein lay the rub: for the most part, the Nazi regime could not get ordinary Germans to distinguish between race and *Volk* or buy into inclusive notions of "racial kinship" that transcended ethnic and national boundaries. Indeed, many within the state and Party apparatus itself could not be persuaded to abide by such nuances. It was this disconnect that troubled one SD officer in November 1940 when he remarked upon a growing tendency to lump different Slavic population groups together, a trend he found "extremely disturbing" because "it does not correspond to our racial way of thinking."[72]

On a more elemental level, what might first appear to be overtly ideological articulations of racism often masked more mundane forms of aversion. When Germans condemned WED candidates for not working hard enough, for not adhering to expected standards of dress, consumption, and cleanliness, or for not adhering the normative moral values and strictures of genteel society, they were primarily responding to behaviors that inconvenienced, irritated, or offended them. In this respect, it is highly

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[66] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 7133, Bd. 89: Kersten to Landrat Fulda, January 23, 1942.
[67] 5/33/72: Marchlewski, 10.21.41.
[68] 5/33/85: Bieganski, 10.41; 3/20a/60-61: Smierzchowska, 4.41.
[69] 5/32/53: Szadowiak, 4.6.41.
[70] Brigitte Entner, "Deportation" in *Pregon koroških Slovencev – Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen, 1942-2002*, ed. Augustin Malle (Klagenfurt: Drava, 2002), 176; Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 52.
[71] 5/35/85-86: Urbanski, undated.
[72] John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 17fn.

significant that popular attitudes toward the re-Germanizables changed considerably over time. Many candidates did not write to the RuSHA to protest any "defamation and poor treatment" until after they had commingled with Germans for long enough to incur their displeasure. Most of the Betriebsführer, moreover, did not show any instinctively negative reaction when their re-Germanizable employees first arrived, nor did they have anything "disadvantageous" to report about them to the Gestapo during the early months of their stay. The Landrat in Fulda observed in October 1942 that a certain Herr Hübner and his wife were "fully satisfied in all respects" with young Walentyna Stelmachowska; only in subsequent messages did the police begin to give notice of rising tensions between Walentyna and her Hausfrau.[73] It was through these kinds of unpredictable, informal relationships that the everyday project of racialization took shape and wormed its way into virtually every facet of social existence. The political culture of the Third Reich enabled Germans to transmute banal understandings of decorum and other "elective affinities" into powerful signifiers of racial belonging, to gain public legitimacy and official backing for even the most vindictive and trivial of motives by manipulating the precepts of National Socialism to suit their own egotistical purposes and predilections. This phenomenon explains why personal values and status concerns played such an overdetermined role in the construction of race on the home front, why this process was so multivalent and erratic, as well as why it is incredibly difficult for historians of the period to establish neat, categorical demarcations between racism and other templates of discrimination like class, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

There is another, more useful framework for grasping this nebulous web of intersecting prejudices: the ambiguous, liminal condition postcolonial theorists refer to as hybridity. In a nutshell, hybridity denotes the state of belonging to two distinct races or cultures at the same time, or possessing characteristics attributed to both, in such a way as to muddle the ostensibly innate and static differences that distinguish them. A byproduct of European colonialism and its attendant cross-cultural exchanges, hybrid forms challenge the stability of socio-political hierarchies by subverting claims of in-group homogeneity or superiority and eroding the psychological boundaries between Self and Other.[74] The Re-Germanization Procedure created exactly this type of situation in towns and villages across the Reich. We can detect it in the numerous letters that SS functionaries sent to civilians and government officials alike reminding them that re-Germanizables were not to be exploited as forced laborers. We also see it in the prediction of one SD officer in early 1940 that "If a distinction is to be made between good Poles and bad among the mass of workers recruited for the Old Reich, this could induce a sense of confusion among the

[73] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 26: Landrat Fulda to Gestapo Kassel, October 9, 1942; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 37: Gendarmerie Bad Salzschlirf to Landrat Fulda, March 22, 1944.

[74] On the postcolonial concept of hybridity, see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 145-174. Also see Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

German population."[75] A civil servant in Frankfurt am Main picked up on something similar a year later: "For the general public, who are unaware of the inner motives of the Germanization action, the extensive concessions granted to these Polish families are totally incomprehensible."[76] The "inner motives" of the program, after all, flew in the face of what most Germans had been taught for generations to revere as the quintessential features of German identity. Nor could they understand why *these* Poles were entitled to the material benefits of Germanness in a time of extreme austerity – a situation which was bound to breed resentment. Candidates who were bilingual or descended from a mixed German-Polish heritage aroused even more suspicious indignation. One host in Dauborn, Wilhelm Wagner, captured all of these sentiments perfectly when he wrote to the local Landrat about Stanislaus Schmidt and his family: "From my experience, the prospects for Germanization are not very good. In my opinion, it must soon be definitively decided whether these people are German or not. They enjoy all of our rights, yet are still not favorably disposed toward Germandom."[77]

For many employers, the hybridity of re-Germanizable Poles generated a form of cognitive dissonance surmountable only through compensatory actions that reaffirmed perceived contrasts between German and non-German. The vicious name-calling they stooped to was the most prevalent of these devices, and here the Betriebsführer tapped into the full repertoire of pejorative tropes their forebears had cultivated over the span of previous centuries. They frequently derided WED candidates as "Polacks," even though the SS had specifically enjoined them never to utter this slur in their presence. They cast aspersion on their intellectual capabilities by maligning them as "dumb" or "stupid Poles," and impugned their character by defaming them as "damned Polish rascals" and "Polish bandits."[78] Most strikingly, they hurled invective that metaphorically reduced them to the level of animals. Zygmunt Malkowski and Mieczyslaw Janiak wrote of how their boss never called them by name, instead referring to them only as "Polish apes," and Nikolai Fornalczyk spoke of "many occasions" when he and his family were "insulted in the ugliest manner as Polish swine and Polish dogs."[79] This kind of verbal abuse functioned as a weapon of dehumanization, allowing those who wielded it to assert power over and express contempt for their victims while obviating any potential feelings of remorse. Put another way, it rationalized as well as normalized subordination. The frequent use of scatological obscenities served a similar purpose. Jan Zochniak's overseer, for instance, denigrated him as a "Polish piece of shit."[80] The demeaning moniker that residents in the town of Mönchberg assigned to the WED candidates living in their midst – "shitty

[75] Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 69.
[76] BA R 36/1052: Preiser to Oberbürgermeister Frankfurt am Main, February 1941.
[77] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1138: Wagner to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, December 14, 1944.
[78] 5/33/53: Schendel, 10.6.41; 3/20a/98: Drozdzinski, 6.22.41; 5/35/145: Swiercz, 4.6.43.
[79] 3/20a/202: Malkowski and Janiak, 8.31.41; 5/35/51: Fornalczyk, 6.28.42.
[80] 2/20/158-159: Zochniak, 9.15.40.

Polish-Germans" – communicates with vulgar precision the spite their hyphenated identities provoked as well as the disavowal that came with it.[81]

These intensely allergic reactions led ordinary people to exclude re-Germanizables from their communities and fashion their own local iterations of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in direct contravention of official commandments from above. Violence constituted the most immediate and visceral means of accomplishing this object. All throughout Germany and Austria, accounts of physical abuse were widespread enough to beggar belief, yet far too consistent in their telling to disregard as falsehoods or exaggerations. Stanislaw Stanczak complained in September 1940 that he and his son were continually harassed and beaten by a German farmhand named Fetzer, and Irena Sliwinska wrote to Schwalm the following January to protest the tyrannical deportment of her overseer: "The landlord scolds us as 'damned Poles' and hits us while we work. He raises his hand to slap us for every little thing."[82] Violent behavior on the part of the Betriebsführer sometimes assumed a perverse ritualistic quality. Malkowski and Janiak alleged that their foreman issued routine beatings on the job; for Josef Lesinski, they took place once a week on Sunday.[83] Jan Karlikowski told the even more bizarre tale of how his boss reveled in chasing him around the farm with a whip, or "hunting," as he called it.[84] Physical abuse was not merely an occupational hazard either; re-Germanizable Poles courted danger in public as well. In the fall of 1941, two German teenagers from Mönchberg savagely assaulted Rynkowski, apparently just for kicks, and capped off the attack by threatening to kill him.[85] An incident narrated by Wladyslaw Potasiak in May of that year indicates that state functionaries could be equally menacing: "My son bought a bicycle and went shopping. On the way there he met a policeman, who looked through his papers and told him that he had to wear the 'P' and could not walk or travel freely. The policeman beat my son, took the bicycle, and drove my son forward in front of him while he rode it."[86] Karlikowski's predicament strongly suggests that the emotionally destabilizing force of hybridity lay behind such acts of aggression: "I too am a German. I travel only in German circles, yet here I am regarded as the lowest type of human being. Poles, Frenchmen, and Russians also work here with the farmer, but he abuses me far more than them." Like many re-Germanizables, Jan appealed to notions of racial solidarity in the hope of securing protection and restoring his sense of dignity. But the claim itself was probably true; it seems that these people really were treated worse than other foreign laborers precisely because of their pretensions to Germanness, because they came off as uppity and inauthentic by comparison, neither fish nor fowl.

[81] 5/33/34: Rynkowski, 9.9.41.
[82] 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40; 5/32/31: Sliwinska, 1.27.41.
[83] 3/20a/202: Malkowski and Janiak, 8.31.41; 5/35/4: Lesinski, 5.10.42.
[84] 5/35/155: Karlikowski, 5.16.43.
[85] 5/33/34: Rynkowski, 9.9.41.
[86] 3/20a/83: Potasiak, 5.13.41.

It is now plain to see why re-Germanizables like Jan Masurek had grown so desperate by the summer of 1942. Nevertheless, they did not give up trying to ameliorate their plight. Naturally enough, those who had the misfortune of working for abusive custodians repeatedly beseeched the race examiners to intervene, or "adjust their views," as Marie Skowronska put it.[87] If that proved unsuccessful, they demanded that the authorities relocate them. Exasperated by his landlord's miserliness, Jan Kania petitioned the Aussenstelle to arrange for a transfer "so that we can lead a better life."[88] Stanislaus Perdek requested a new location on the following grounds: "Our boss does not treat us like humans. He insists that we will die with him… We have had it up our ears with all of this."[89] A number of candidates also sought permission to visit loved ones back in Poland during the vacation time they were theoretically entitled to, and some even begged the SS to deport them to the General Government.[90] When Nazi officials did not offer redress after numerous entreaties, the re-Germanizables threatened to flee their assigned workplaces and "go underground" regardless of the consequences. In lieu of flight, many began to lash out at the race examiners of the RuSHA for putting them in such a dreadful quandary. Jan Slowinski for one did not temper his anger: "You told us that we would have it good here… but these promises have not been fulfilled… You expelled us from our farm so that these damned Volhynian Germans could occupy it… It would've been better if you had just killed us."[91] A handful of brave individuals also chose to engage in passive resistance. Ignatz Grzoskowiak in Weyhe refused to initial the labor contract drawn up by his employer in May 1941, and in February 1942 Jozef Swiatek attempted to warn his parents, then inmates at the Aussenstelle, what awaited them in the Reich: "I know they have taken you, but you must not give in… They will promise you many pleasant things, but here you will only work, and if you do not, you will be beaten… You would be foolish to come to Germany."[92]

Violence, exploitation, and ostracism stimulated a process of disassociation from the larger German collective. Disillusioned by the callousness of their hosts and neighbors, WED candidates reacted by questioning whether they actually were "capable of re-Germanization." In one letter to the Aussenstelle, Helena Michalska briefly summed up the uncertainty felt by many when she asked, "I am no longer a Pole, but a German, right?"[93] Maria Wawrzyniak likewise underlined the disorienting effect of this interstitial limbo: "What will become of me as a German who cannot truly be German?"[94] The inability to label oneself in an unambiguous way reflected the existential crisis these people faced as they struggled to transition between two worlds, between a vanished past to which they had once belonged and

[87] 5/35/26: Skowronska, 7.7.42.
[88] 2/20/220: Kania, 12.40.
[89] 5/35/143: Perdek, 3.10.43.
[90] 5/35/49: Z. Jasinska, 6.25.42; 5/32/37: Palczewski, 3.6.41; 5/31/76: Drozdowska, 12.11.40.
[91] 2/20/123: Slowinski, 8.40.
[92] 3/20a/67: Grzoskowiak, 5.21.41; 5/34/57: Swiatek, 2.24.42.
[93] 5/34/11: Michalska, undated.
[94] 5/34/77: Wawrzyniak, 3.24.42.

an uncertain future in which they evidently had no place. Despite the patronage of the mighty SS, WED candidates did not possess enough social or cultural capital to authenticate their Germanness – not even to themselves. Convinced by their experiences that a release from the program would improve their lot, they began to invert previous survival strategies and brazenly identify themselves as foreigners. "I will not cut my head off and replace it with a German-speaking one," Wincenty Krzewinski proclaimed in January 1942.[95] Writing from Munich that June, Eugenia Wojcik declared that she "would rather work in a factory as a Polish woman and live in a camp than be a German and work as a servant."[96] Jozef Swiatek was even more trenchant in his defiance: "They can beat me to death if they want, but I am a Pole."[97] For these subjects and many others, re-Germanization did the exact opposite of what its architects had intended.

Inundated with letters detailing the miserable circumstances in which WED candidates lived, Himmler's race and resettlement experts did what they could to help them. As early as October 1940, Ermin Künzel sent Wladyslaw Skrzypeck the following message (in Polish and German) from the Aussenstelle: "I have received your letter and can see that you have concerns. I have written today to the authorities in Germany about your request for them to assist you. Write to me again so that I know how things are going."[98] RuSHA functionaries did indeed contact state and Party administrators all the time on behalf of their re-Germanizable wards, as we have already seen. To apply pressure on uncooperative officials, they also forwarded letters of complaint from WED candidates to the responsible HSSPFs. Upon learning that the mayor of Rügenwalde had forced the Krupa and Magdziarz families to wear the P badge and would not supply them with food and clothing vouchers, the HSSPF in Pomerania, Emil Mazuw, dispatched a representative to "enlighten" him "on the sense and purpose behind the settlement of re-Germanizable persons." Soon afterwards, Mazuw informed the RKF Staff Main Office that "The mayor in question regrets his mistake and from that moment on has done everything for the benefit of the families."[99] Sometimes the RuSHA corresponded directly with the Betriebsführer. Hofmann wrote to Else Schmidt in Treskow, for instance, explaining that the girl allocated to her was "German in terms of appearance and blood" and "must be educated in every respect to become a full-fledged German." He similarly urged Maria Meyer in Hamburg to show "extreme patience and understanding" when dealing with re-Germanizable workers.[100] He even suggested that the HSSPFs organize get-togethers for women who employed "racially valuable" Polish housemaids in order to clarify their responsibilities.[101]

Getting negligent civilian overseers to heed their wishes, however, turned out to be easier said than done. At first, SS functionaries simply presumed that "difficulties of any kind can be remedied

[95] 5/34/25: Krzewinski, 1.21.42.
[96] 5/35/7: Wojcik, 5.16.42.
[97] 5/34/57: Swiatek, 2.24.42.
[98] USHMMA 15.021M/2/20/157: Künzel to Skrzypeck, October 29, 1940.
[99] BA NS 19/1780/18-19: Mazuw to Fähndrich, February 26, 1943.
[100] BA NS 2/45/193-194: Hofmann to Schmidt, June 19, 1941; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 291.
[101] BA NS 2/82/169: Hofmann to Rüterbusch, September 25, 1942.

through consultations with the employer."[102] Though naïve, this supposition was not entirely unfounded. Thanks to his tireless inspection of participating households in SS-District Middle, Wilhelm Dörhöfer successfully coaxed one reluctant farmer into building a "suitable" domicile for his re-Germanizable laborers and persuaded another to set aside his frugality and adhere to the regulations on distributing payment in kind.[103] A delegate from the Reich Food Estate in Hersfeld related a comparable incident in which "complaints were brought forth regarding long working hours, but the matter was cleared up through a discussion on the spot."[104] Be that as it may, in most cases these attempts at conflict resolution backfired. Stanislawa Magdzinska realized all too well that state oversight had serious limitations: "Whenever someone comes from the SS, the boss naturally invites them in and tells them everything is peachy, but when they leave he acts worse than before… He does nothing to sow the seeds in our hearts that would make us want to become citizens."[105] After one adviser reprimanded Marta Musislek's employer at Dongus' behest, she initially registered some improvement, but several months later it was "the same old story."[106] If German hosts ignored the admonitions of local SS envoys, they were even less likely to cave to the demands of RuSHA personnel in Łódź and Berlin. What was more, these intrusions irritated the Betriebsführer. That February, one estate-owner in Celle sent an angry message to Dörhöfer in which he took umbrage at charges of dereliction and voiced strong displeasure with what he regarded as unwarranted meddling by the SS.[107] This episode illustrates the fraught dialogue the WED initiated between the Nazi regime and its citizenry, one that pitted government agencies against one another and by extension colored how they viewed the re-Germanizables.

For one thing, allowing these people to take their grievances to the Aussenstelle produced friction between the RuSHA and SS functionaries on the ground. In a letter to Hofmann dated January 29, 1941, HSSPF Kaul dismissed most of the complaints lodged by candidates in his district as "baseless" and "petty," adding furthermore that they should write to him for assistance instead.[108] Hofmann replied several days later, arguing that the race examiners "obviously" had "a legitimate interest in hearing how these families are doing," and that the families themselves had every right to seek aid from men they already knew. Though he agreed that re-Germanizables often exaggerated their woes, Hofmann prevailed upon Kaul "to consider the mentality of these people, especially the fact that restrictions to their free will have an extremely demoralizing impact."[109] Yet by September of that year, even Dörhöfer was starting to

[102] BA R 59/45/18-19: Sonderdruck aus den "Mitteilungen des Hauptamtes für Volkstumsfragen," unsigned, July 1943.
[103] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 72: Dörhöfer to Arbeitsamt Uelzen, September 23, 1941; NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 101: Bratze to Dörhöfer, August 9, 1941.
[104] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 194: Kreisbauernführer Hersfeld to Landrat Fulda, March 27, 1941.
[105] 5/35/146-147: Magdzinska, 4.5.43.
[106] 5/35/137-138: Musislek, 1.22.43.
[107] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 147: Bernstorff to Dörhöfer, February 2, 1941.
[108] BA NS 2/79/157-159: Kaul to Hofmann, January 29, 1941.
[109] BA NS 2/79/155-156: Hofmann to Kaul, February 3, 1941.

gripe about interference and indiscretion on the part of the Aussenstelle. "The families apparently believe that because we want them as Germans we are obligated to provide them with unlimited entitlements," he fumed in a cable to HSSPF Pancke, "With the appearance of any kind of dispute, they threaten to write to the RuSHA Aussenstelle… even though the farmers do everything they can to make their stay as pleasant as possible."[110] Schwalm defended his subordinates and assured Greifelt (somewhat dishonestly) that "the Aussenstelle does not make any kind of promises to Germanizable Poles… save that they will be treated as Reich Germans in accordance with the decrees of the Reichsführer-SS." Yet while continuing to assert his prerogative to monitor WED candidates, he too betrayed a sense of frustration with their seemingly presumptuous expectations: "It is incomprehensible to me that these people could claim on the basis of such statements that we have made any binding promises to them."[111]

Still, Schwalm and his colleagues could appreciate that something had to be done to lessen the "demoralizing impact" Hofmann spoke of. And so they resolved to grant single individuals a leave of absence to visit relatives in the incorporated eastern territories, even though it blatantly contradicted the imperative to separate them from Poles. This concession was clearly a response to the pleas of the re-Germanizables themselves. Although Fähndrich noted a growing number of applications to travel to Poland in June 1941, he ordered "a fundamental rejection of such vacation attempts," unless the purpose of the trip was to see an ailing member of the immediate family or attend their funeral. In June 1942, he changed his tune and announced that "experiences gained in the past year justify a relaxation of my earlier directive." Yet even this moderately compassionate gesture came with strings attached. The acquisition of a travel permit depended on the consent of the employer and the responsible HSSPF. In addition, candidates could not apply until at least six months after their deployment in the Reich, during which time they had to demonstrate "perfect behavior as well as an outward commitment to re-Germanization." They were also obligated to report to the police upon arriving at and departing from their destination in Poland and sign an affidavit pledging that they would return to Germany.[112] While Himmler's experts wanted to make life easier for WED candidates, they did not trust them enough to relinquish strict control over their mobility and feared the specter of them "wandering to and fro," even when their ethnic-political reliability seemed beyond reproach.[113] According to one RuSHA official, furloughs spent in Poland were inherently "undesirable," and the RKF and SD had sanctioned them

[110] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 73: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 11, 1941.
[111] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/61-62: Schwalm to Greifelt, September 12, 1941.
[112] HStD G 15, J 173, Bd. 5: Fähndrich to HSSPFs, June 1942.
[113] HStD G 15, J 534: Waldeck to Oberbürgermeistern, Landräte, Polizeipräsidenten, and Polizeidirektoren in Hesse, May 12, 1942.

"against their own better judgment."[114] For neither the first nor the last time, the paranoia of Himmler's men impaired their capacity to empathize with the people they had chosen to "reclaim" for Germandom.

On the other hand, they acknowledged that the best way to deal with noncompliant overseers was to remove candidates from their custody and transfer them elsewhere. This too was a response to developments on the ground. Acting on information from the Labor Office in Detmold, in January 1941 Dongus concluded that the homestead of Heinrich Brückner "appears totally insufficient for the accommodation of a Germanizable family"; he instructed HSSPF Jeckeln to relocate said family at once.[115] By the end of the year, Pancke and Dörhöfer were busy shifting WED candidates around from one part of Lower Saxony to another because their original employers treated them as "objects of exploitation."[116] Quite unexpectedly, civilian enterprises quickly took advantage of the situation to shed unqualified, redundant, or otherwise unsatisfactory laborers. One proprietor summoned Dörhöfer to relieve him of two re-Germanizable farmhands who were "not suited for agricultural work"; far from the idyllic image of German peasants, these men apparently showed "no aptitude for it at all." When Dörhöfer demurred and counseled forbearance, the employer turned to local labor officials instead, who shipped the workers in question to a meat-packing plant in Braunschweig.[117] The case of Karol and Leokadia Skwarka offers another instructive example; their boss penned the following to the Landrat in Fulda in August 1941: "From the outset, I have not been satisfied with their work performance… Skwarka is not a farmer by trade, but he has made no effort to learn… When I am present, both of them work intently, but as soon as I leave them alone, they work much less… I have the impression that both of them are intentionally sick in order to avoid work… I therefore ask that they be removed from my farm."[118] Beyond hardheaded economic pragmatism, personal animosities also came to the fore when pressing for a dismissal. Herr Hübner solicited the chief gendarme in Bad Salzschlirf to exchange Walentyna Stelmachowska with another housemaid because "the relationship between Frau Hübner and the Germanizable is very tense."[119] This practice of "reshuffling" became an evermore common fallback as the war went on. In SS-District West, eighteen "changes of residence" took place in May 1941; in January 1942, there were over one hundred.[120] The frequency with which they resorted to this option

[114] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[115] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/81: Dongus to Jeckeln, January 23, 1941.

[116] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 43-44: Dörhöfer to Pancke, December 3, 1941. Also see the inventories for SS-District Middle in NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim Acc. 132/90, Nr. 202.

[117] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 71: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 23, 1941; NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 69: Pancke to Dörhöfer, October 10, 1941.

[118] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 269: Landrat Fulda, "Aktenvermerk über Eindeutschung," September 19, 1941.

[119] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 37: Gendarmerie Bad Salzschlirf to Landrat Fulda, March 22, 1944.

[120] See the collection of inventories for SS-District West in LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160. Sometimes the HSSPFs sent them to one of the VoMi resettlement camps in lieu of transfer to another employer.

ensured that many candidates never had a chance to put down roots in a given locale and remained social outsiders wherever they went.

No matter what the race and resettlement experts did, nothing seemed to work, and incoming reports from officials all over the Reich indicated that the situation was starting to spiral out of control. The chief gendarme in Fulda apprised his superiors on numerous occasions in late 1941 that re-Germanizables continued to interact with nearby Poles and thus retained their "Polish frame of mind."[121] Other constables and NSDAP bureaucrats in the region observed that they still conversed only in Polish, wanted nothing more than to go back to Poland, and had zero inclination to labor for the German cause.[122] To be sure, provincial administrators did not absolve the Betriebsführer of culpability for this state of affairs. The Party Kreisleiter in Eckernförde commented that local estate-owners nearly always failed to show sensitivity for the peculiar circumstances of re-Germanizable Poles.[123] After investigating repeated spats between the Lamcha family and their caretakers, the Kreisbauernführer in Hersfeld concluded, "In my opinion, blame lies on both sides. For the most part, however, it is the fault of the employer and his family members, who do not understand how to treat these people and lack the necessary tact."[124] But they did not exactly stick up for "these people" either, and usually they sided with their hosts. While conceding that the living conditions of the Fortuna family in Brockhöfe left much to be desired, Dörhöfer nevertheless exonerated the responsible overseer of wrongdoing and even endorsed his routine use of violence as an appropriate remedy for their "indolence." He painted the Fortunas as "deceitful" and "malevolent" characters, and claimed that they "place no value whatsoever on becoming Germans."[125]

The disconcerting tales that filtered in from the provinces concerning female re-Germanizables also seemed to validate the Nazis' pathological anxieties concerning "the Polish woman" and vindicate the authoritarian demeanor of their supervisors. Police officials in Kirberg, for instance, credited the wayward behavior of young Weronika Schmidt to "asocial" and "work-shy" tendencies, and hinted at sterilization or euthanasia as a possible "solution": "To all appearances, she is not mentally competent [*…nicht geistig voll zu werten*]. An investigation here is in order."[126] The chief gendarme in Schenklengsfeld submitted a comparably damning report on another young woman, Maria Krzeminska: "She maintains a romantic relationship with a Pole and visits him often. When confronted, she declared that she had been forced into this because neither a German man nor a German girl would get involved with her." He advocated that the Landrat withdraw any promise of citizenship "as quickly as possible."[127]

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[121] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 143: Gendarmerie Fulda to Landrat Fulda, August 15, 1941.
[122] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 52: Gendarmerie Grossenlüder to Landrat Fulda, October 7, 1942; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 54: Kreisleiter Fulda to Landrat Fulda, November 13, 1942.
[123] BA NS 18/528/73: Kreisleiter Eckernförde, "Wochenbericht betr. Eindeutschung von Polen," November 20, 1941.
[124] HStm 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 53: Kreisbauernführer Hersfeld to Landrat Fulda, December 2, 1942.
[125] NLH Hann 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 9: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 10, 1941.
[126] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1122: Gendarmerie Kirberg to Landrat Limburg, March 2, 1942.
[127] HStM 180 Hersfeld, Nr. A 2771: Gendarmerie Schenklengsfeld to Landrat Hersfeld, May 9, 1943.

German civilians volunteered their opinions as well. The employer of Wladislawa Blaszcyk in Ziegenhain told the police that she was "not capable of Germanization" and "would not be a valuable addition to the German *Volk*" because she "has had a shady past, is crazy about men, and in her entire essence does not behave as one would expect from a German."[128]

Allegations of immoral conduct and "un-German" behavior soon merged with political recriminations. The Kreisleiter in Fulda imputed the purportedly lackluster work performance of the re-Germanizables and their wariness of local Germans to seditious, pro-Polish tendencies, asserting that they did not in any way exhibit a "positive disposition toward the National Socialist state and its institutions." A colleague in Grossenlüder concurred: "their political attitude is definitely not entirely sound."[129] After meeting with the Betriebsführer in his town, the mayor of Kirch-Göns described one woman living there as "overtly anti-German" and another as "a sketchy character." While affirming that their "external racial appearance" was "not unfavorable," he nevertheless forecast that "Their absorption into Germandom appears unlikely. In terms of behavior, both persons are typical Poles."[130] Gestapo agents issued similar warnings about the "open rebelliousness" of WED candidates in Württemberg, who persisted in "clinging to their Polish ethnicity" and made no effort at all to assimilate into their assigned communities. One family even declared that "they would return to their farm in Poland when Germany loses the war!"[131] Dörhöfer likewise detected "defeatist" sentiments among the re-Germanizables in Lower Saxony, which he ascribed to rabble-rousing Polish relatives who "egged them on."[132]

Of course, for believers in the myth of "lost German blood," such defiance was perfectly normal. As one SD officer in Stuttgart explained, "The fact that a former member of a foreign nationality resists Germanization or was previously active in foreign nationalist organizations speaks in their favor." These "Germanic blood carriers," he went on, had become the "natural leaders" of the Polish nation and therefore instinctively "assumed the toughest oppositional stance against their own German people."[133] But for many administrators, particularly within the Nazi Party, the ramifications of the WED confirmed that one could only go so far in attempting to salvage these people before risking disaster. The mayor of Hüttenthal was one such figure; he deprecated young Adam Galonszkiewicz as "one of the worst Poles in the area" and judged him "unsuitable for Germanization" in light of his conniving with Russian workers.[134] The Ortsgruppenleiter in Spieskappel was another. After hearing rumors that Stefan Wilmanski had "repeatedly acted as an instigator among Polish prisoners of war and civilian laborers," he

[128] HStM 180 Ziegenhain, Nr. 7072: Landrat Ziegenhain to Gestapo Kassel, July 12, 1943.
[129] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 54: Kreisleiter Fulda to Landrat Fulda, November 13, 1942; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 52: Gendarmerie Grossenlüder to Landrat Fulda, October 7, 1942.
[130] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11376: Bürgermeister Kirch-Göns to Landrat Friedberg, September 2, 1944.
[131] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[132] NLH Hann 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 9: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 10, 1941.
[133] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[134] HStD G 15, J 173: Gendarmerie Beerfelden to Landrat Erbach, July 20, 1943.

tendered the following statement to the Landrat of Ziegenhain: "I do not consider the Germanization of this Pole to be a benefit for the German *Volksgemeinschaft*."[135] Instead of conforming to the image of "racially valuable ethnic comrades," WED candidates increasingly took on the appearance of anti-German "renegades." And as such, in the eyes of many Nazis, they represented a clear and present danger to the internal political stability of the Third Reich, all the more capable of fomenting insurrection because of the "German blood" that flowed through their veins.

There can be no doubt that preexisting cultural attitudes conditioned these fears, but they were activated by the social exchanges of re-Germanizable Poles, their German hosts, and officials tasked with the day-to-day management of the WED. The case of Stefania Steczak conveys how this dynamic unfolded at the micro level and transmitted popular opinion to the keenly attuned ears of the Nazi regime. In the spring of 1941, quarrels between Stefania and her mistress, Frau Vogel, prompted a visit by local gendarmes, who chided Stefania yet also determined that "Frau Vogel does not properly follow the given instructions." They opted to transfer the girl to another location instead of trying to mediate further.[136] In the meantime, Herr Vogel wrote to the Aussenstelle to tell his side of the story: "Already in the first days, it was obvious that her attitude was anything but pro-German. Her overall bearing has not changed at all during her time here. She often insists that she is a Pole and wanted to remain a Pole." He attributed this behavior to "provocation from other Poles … Germanizable and others, [who] have gatherings for hours nearly every evening." Although Vogel prohibited Stefania from attending these events, he was unable to stop her nightly liaisons with a Polish prisoner of war. He also accused her of stealing money and personal items while cleaning his bedroom. Yet when he alerted police of the theft on March 9, 1941, Stefania overheard and absconded in the night. She thereafter met with Polish comrades and "got so drunk that she remained lying in the street until Sunday afternoon." Although he had pushed for Stefania's reassignment, Vogel nevertheless considered it his duty to pass along this information "because someday the Germanizable Poles should indeed become decent human beings."[137] But things did not get any better with her new overseer, Klemens Brähler. In June 1941, Stefania fled from his home as well, later telling the Gestapo under interrogation that he "did not treat me well during my stay, insofar as he constantly chastised me about my work performance and personally called me a 'Polack bitch.'" When the police returned Stefania to Brähler, he said he no longer wanted to employ her.[138]

Accounts like this, with their motifs of agitation, decadence, criminality, and hysteria, gradually altered the perspective of Himmler and his acolytes. They continued to put their usual positive spin on the results of the Re-Germanization Procedure and maintained the fiction that it was an almost uniformly

[135] HStM 180 Ziegenhain, Nr. 7077: Kreisleiter Ziegenhain to Landrat Ziegenhain, May 5, 1942.
[136] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 10: Landrat Fulda to Waldeck, May 30, 1941.
[137] HStM 180 Fulda. Nr. 6035, Bd. 7: Vogel to Schwalm, March 19, 1941.
[138] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 12: Vernehmungsniederschriften Margarete Winter and Stefania Steczak, June 13, 1941; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6035, Bd. 14: Landrat Fulda to Kreisbauernschaft Fulda, June 16, 1941.

successful undertaking. "It is naturally a delicate matter," Fähndrich told an audience of ethnic Germans in late September 1941, "but we have until now gained quite good experiences, because the selectees feel that they are merging into Germandom."[139] In the Warthegau, HSSPF Koppe blithely announced in February 1942 that re-Germanizable Poles had made "good progress without exception, especially the domestic employees."[140] That July, Hofmann bragged to the head of German Women's Work in Berlin that the program had yielded a "very good outcome."[141] Yet behind such statements lurked a great deal of wishful thinking and disappointment. Himmler knew better too. In August 1941, he upbraided Greifelt for running the program "too bureaucratically" and failing to address the "psychological angle" of re-Germanization – by which he meant promoting bonds of fellowship between WED candidates and the German people.[142] The Reichsführer-SS put his finger right on the critical issue: although the Nazi regime went to astonishing lengths to prevent interactions between Germans and "pure" Poles, they could not get Germans to tolerate "racially valuable" Poles as compatriots.

Increasingly embittered by this lack of "progress," the race and resettlement experts of the SS began to articulate a much harsher and more unforgiving stance. In a memorandum for Himmler dated February 20, 1942, Rudolf Creutz at the RKF Staff Main Office candidly admitted, "Certainly the desire for Germanization is lacking… As a rule, the results of individual deployment have not been favorable in the case of young re-Germanizables. It is hardly possible to prevent correspondence with their families. Moreover, homesickness is a big factor. Many of the allocated servant girls have been obstinate and had to be punished. Several suicide attempts occurred."[143] Hofmann's correspondence from later that year attests to a definite hardening of attitudes. The RuSHA chief denounced the "obstreperous" conduct of the re-Germanizables and verified that "from all the districts… there are many complaints that they behave in a defiant and insolent manner." He was particularly worried about unrest among the Hausgehilfinnen. Having previously endorsed their attendance at educational assemblies chaired by Nazi women's associations, Hofmann now saw these seminars as a "huge liability" because they established a forum for the girls to "talk about their experiences, exchange stories, and give each other advice." In reference to personal experience with his own domestic servant, Josepha, he gave voice to the change in tone more bluntly: "I myself employ a young re-Germanizable Polish girl in my household, who can only be kept in check if one is strict with her."[144] Hofmann's diction telegraphs a dramatic perceptual shift: although before they had endeavored to guarantee the well-being of WED candidates, he and his colleagues now began to lose patience with their seeming inability to meet adversity with fortitude. The failure of re-

[139] BDC SSO/194: Fähndrich, "Die politischen Aufgaben der Umsiedler im Reich," September 28, 1941.
[140] BA NS 19/150/50-51: Koppe to Brandt, February 13, 1942.
[141] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/113-114: Hofmann to Rüterbusch, July 10, 1942.
[142] BA NS 19/150/42: Brandt to Greifelt, August 31, 1941.
[143] LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942.
[144] BA NS 2/82/171-172: Hofmann to Heissmeyer, September 25, 1942.

Germanizable Poles to live up to Nazi ideals of Germanness convinced Himmler and his men that many of them were unworthy of the "honor" bestowed upon them. Whereas they had earlier showered these people with praise, they now depicted them as "obstinate," "obstreperous," "insolent," and "defiant." The race and resettlement experts blamed the victims and sided with the oppressors, reasoning that many inductees must have deserved the suffering that Germans inflicted on them.

The solution they devised for dispensing with those who were unable to work marked the first sign that a new and far more brutal policy line was in the offing. The race examiners' insistence on settling whole families together had always imposed a logistical burden on German employers by forcing them to take on people who could not earn their own keep, mainly children, the disabled, and the elderly. Many Betriebsführer were just as eager to get rid of sick and "superfluous" tenants as local bureaucrats were to reduce the number of excess mouths to feed, so the SS started sporadically shipping these unfortunates back to Poland. While recovering from childbirth in a clinic in Uelzen in October 1940, a certain Frau Galanciak disclosed that she was suffering from a "sickness of the lungs." Upon hearing this from Dörhöfer, HSSPF Pancke consulted with Himmler and together they resolved to have the local Public Health Office perform a "medical evaluation" of the entire Galanciak family. "If it turns out that the family is not suitable for admission into the German body politic," Pancke decreed, "they should be returned to Poland."[145] The conflation of infectious and congenital illnesses is unmistakable, though the diagnosis of psychological disorders often produced the same fallout. In June 1941, the Gestapo alerted Schwalm to expect the arrival of Franciszek Koza at the Aussenstelle and send him on to the General Government if possible. Although initially deployed in the Saar-Palatinate, a physician there had "determined that Koza is mentally ill and not suitable for re-Germanization."[146]

Koza was not the only re-Germanizable this happened to. The previous March, the Aussenstelle housed a total of fifty-six WED candidates whom authorities in Germany had "sent back due to illness or other reasons."[147] Already under pressure from Himmler, Greifelt aimed to stem the influx of such persons at its source. That August, he forwarded Schwalm the findings from examinations carried out by two public health doctors in Austria, both of them specialists in the pathology of tuberculosis, and counseled that he and his examiners "apply a stricter regimen in order to prevent people with hereditary illnesses from entering the Old Reich."[148] By the end of the year, the SS was repatriating WED candidates in ever larger numbers, especially the sick, the unemployed, and those who had been incapacitated by work-related injuries. "As a result of illness or the absence of a viable breadwinner," Fähndrich informed Hofmann on December 15, 1941, "there are some re-Germanizable families who have become a serious

[145] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 116-117: Dörhöfer to Landrat Uelzen, November 13, 1940; NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 114: Pancke to Gauleitung Hannover, December 6, 1940.
[146] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/136: Dongus to Lorenz, June 21, 1941.
[147] USHMMA 15.040M/1/247/95: Schwalm to Fähndrich, March 29, 1941.
[148] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/48: Greifelt to Hofmann, August 6, 1941.

burden on their German employers and thus create enormous problems as well as costs… In recent times, the number of such cases has risen." He and his RKF associates had already surrendered to the appeals of the Betriebsführer and agreed to take "inoperative" subjects off of their hands; now they wanted the race examiners to conduct retroactive inspections of these families "with the purpose of removing from the re-Germanization measures all those among them who were included only as racially borderline cases… because such families comprise an undesirable infusion of blood and produce avoidable expenses over the long term."[149] Fähndrich's proposal invoked racism and utilitarianism in equal parts to justify the use of exclusionary violence, all in the name of accommodating the commercial interests of private enterprises. As always, the Eignungsprüfer were reluctant to comply with anything that might call the legitimacy of their determinations into question. Furious that public health officials in Germany had challenged their verdicts, they were none too thrilled about reopening old casework either. Nevertheless, by the spring of 1942 they had come around to Fähndrich's point of view. In early April, Hofmann reiterated that the RuSHA alone was "entitled and authorized to implement racial examinations of ethnic aliens and give the final judgment… the alteration or repeal of earlier investigation results by newly involved examiners is not permissible." But he also acknowledged that there were some instances where "special grounds necessitate a reevaluation of ethnic aliens who have already been examined."[150] In essence, he conceded that his inspectors had made mistakes in the past, while insisting that only they could correct them.

The race and resettlement experts obviously interpreted the supposed shortcomings of re-Germanizable Poles in biological terms, though inhibiting racial degeneration was far from the only concern on their minds. They had always looked upon WED candidates with a measure of suspicion, surmising that they remained beholden to the Polish national cause and filled with hostility toward Germandom. The praxis of re-Germanization reinforced this assumption. To all appearances, most were still "Polonized" – in many cases, irretrievably so. To make matters worse, some seemed to be actively undermining the National Socialist regime. The belief that these "bearers of lost German blood" posed a serious ethnic-political threat living in the very heart of the Reich compelled SS functionaries to contemplate more severe methods for disciplining them. In truth, re-Germanizable Poles had never been immune from prosecution for "anti-state activity," and the threat of incarceration was certainly in the air well before 1942. Back in November 1940, Greifelt had instructed the HSSPFs that "proceedings for violations of the law or other objectionable state-political behavior must take place in the same way they do against Reich Germans." He forbade deportation to the General Government as a possible corrective because "this measure would not always be seen by the Poles as a punishment." He floated the option of "transfer[ring] an unruly Pole to a concentration camp," yet also advised clemency: "It must obviously be

[149] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/19-20: Fähndrich to Hofmann, December 15, 1941.
[150] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/33: Hofmann to Greifelt, HSSPFs, and RuS-Führer, April 1, 1942.

considered that these people, who recently had to leave behind their homeland and property, cannot yet be expected to show a total affirmation of Germanness."[151] Time and again, however, officials from the RKF, the VoMi, and the SD called for the imposition of stiffer penalties against recalcitrants.[152] In October 1941, several HSSPFs met with regional security organs to discuss the possibility of placing such individuals in "protective custody."[153] They lobbied for a procedure to neutralize "behaviorally unsuitable or anti-German persons," even if they were "racially flawless."

Just such a course of action was soon under discussion at the very highest levels of government. On April 5, 1942, Hitler offhandedly censured Himmler for his management of the program, remarking that he "was no particular friend of any Germanization attempt that did not succeed in securing [the subjects] ideologically."[154] A little over a month later, invitations went out to the heads of the RuSHA, the SD, and the VoMi bidding them (or an appointed representative) to attend a conference at the RKF Staff Main Office in Berlin on May 27, 1942. The policy line that emerged over the course of this meeting came to be known as "exclusion" (*Herausnahme*), the principles of which Greifelt outlined in a draft ordinance the following month.[155] Although the RuSHA had taken "the greatest care in the selection of re-Germanizables" to "eliminate from the outset all persons with hereditary diseases or a criminal record," there were "still a number of families and individuals whose exclusion from the Re-Germanization Procedure appears necessary." Greifelt first specified the removal of people with "hereditary illnesses or other ailments which make them permanently unfit for work," singling out invalids, the elderly, and children in particular. A second category of "undesirables" consisted of "individuals whose character or attitude is inferior or who have a very bad criminal record," and "families whose psychological value does not match their physiological racial classification, for instance, cases of work-shy or asocial elements, or cases where the mental capacities of the children are far below par or the household of the family is unsanitary." Beyond its stark recognition of discrepancies between eugenic and anthropological definitions of race this typology subsumed virtually all of the complaints raised by and about WED candidates under the rubric of biological inferiority, translating a whole series of anti-Slavic stereotypes into an idiom of racial contamination. All the while, there was an implicit understanding that race did not dictate ethnicity, coupled with an incitement to apply brute force whenever conventional techniques of assimilation came up short or the possibility existed that Polonization might spread to Germans who did not uphold a "healthy *völkisch* sentiment." To this effect, the document contained a separate clause authorizing "educational or punitive measures for reasons of insubordination or a politically resistant

[151] BA R 49/73/8-9: Greifelt to HSSPFs, November 29, 1940.
[152] LOC/NMT, 649.
[153] Schäfer, *Fremdarbeiter und NS-Rassenpolitik*, 176.
[154] See Peter Witte et al., eds., *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/1942* (Hamburg: Christians, 1999), 391-392fn.
[155] BA R 59/46/33-34: Creutz to Lorenz, May 18, 1942.

attitude." Although Greifelt stipulated that such behavior on its own did not warrant ejection, he gave Gestapo officers a green light to imprison WED candidates as they saw fit.[156] He later dubbed this approach "*Volkstumspolitik* carried out with the big stick."[157]

Although jurisdictional disputes delayed the publication of Greifelt's ordinance until December, the HSSPFs began implementing this "exclusion procedure" immediately. As discussed before, they had already been deporting sick and "inoperative" candidates back to Łódź for some time; in the spring of 1942, they started to expunge them from the rolls of the WED as well, obtaining approval from the RKF after the fact.[158] What happened to these people when they arrived in Poland remains something of a mystery. Although the Aussenstelle presumably released them to go live with relatives, it is highly likely that many ended up in one of the many makeshift holding pens for expellees that dotted the countryside. In Germany, those subjects who were kicked out of the WED for the "other reasons" Greifelt mentioned found themselves relegated to the helot status of "pure" Polish Wanderarbeiter and exposed to a range of discriminatory regulations, with whatever privileges they had hitherto enjoyed permanently suspended. The SS took the additional precaution of relocating them from German farms and households into guarded labor barracks.[159] That functionaries in the provinces concentrated on people with supposed hereditary defects is evidenced by the expulsion of Marian Durasik, an epileptic, and Helena Rydz, who entered a psychiatric hospital in September 1942 on account of an unknown "mental disorder" and discovered in March 1943 that she was no longer a member of the Re-Germanization Procedure.[160] Without question, the harshest repercussions befell candidates who had been "convicted of a criminal offense which suggests their hereditary-biological and characterological inferiority." In that case, Ehlich directed the Gestapo to "transfer the asocial, previously re-Germanizable person to a concentration camp after they have served their sentence for the crime."[161]

Regardless of why they chose to go after a given individual or family, the HSSPFs unleashed their wrath upon the re-Germanizables with ever greater alacrity once the issuance of the exclusion decree empowered them with an official license to do so. With detailed personal files and surveillance reports on every WED candidate under their supervision, they had copious amounts of data with which to justify their actions, and no doubt already had certain persons in mind well in advance. In Westphalia, Karl Gutenberger ousted four people from the program in April 1942; in July 1943, he did the same thing to

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[156] BA R 59/46/35-37: Greifelt, "Strafmassnahmen und Herausnahme aus dem Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," June 22, 1942. For the official version of this decree, published on December 12, 1942, see BA R 59/46/47-48.

[157] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 750-751.

[158] BA R 59/46/43-44: Greifelt to Lorenz, November 4, 1942; USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/88: Bethge to Kaul, May 30, 1942.

[159] See Grotz's testimony in LOC/NMT, 807-808.

[160] IPN Fond 358/246, Bd. 74: Weithase to Arbeitsamt Litzmannstadt, August 3, 1942; ITS 0.1/34047/367: ITS Index Card on Helena Rydz. Also see the inventory for SS-District West from July 1943 in LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160.

[161] HStM 180 Ziegenhain, Nr. 7072: Ehlich to SD- and Stapo(leit)stellen, January 11, 1944.

twenty-three more.[162] By that point, a standardized framework for administering these dismissals had taken shape. Every month, SS advisers in the provinces scanned their records for subjects who fit the profile and conferred with a number of different state and Party officials: in addition to the police and the RuS-Führer (who could also recommend candidates for exclusion), the responsible Kreisbauernführer, delegates of the German Labor Front, and physicians from the public health offices. They also interviewed the Betriebsführer. After collecting opinions from each of these sources, the proceedings were forwarded to the HSSPFs, who filed an application with the RKF, where Dr. Willy Bethge consulted the Race Office or the Aussenstelle and then rendered the definitive judgment. The guidelines for initiating "educational and punitive measures" against "recalcitrants," by contrast, were much more straightforward: all the Gestapo had to do was notify the HSSPF, apprehend the suspect, and dispatch him or her to a penal institution.[163]

The launch of the exclusion procedure in the spring of 1942 marked a watershed moment in the history of National Socialist Germanization policy. By installing a purge mechanism within the WED, it heralded the transition to a much darker and more violent platform of racial consolidation. Whereas before the race and resettlement experts of the SS had forbidden the use of overt coercion to ensure a "quick Germanization," they now took it full throttle. They also began to contend that many "bearers of lost German blood" were simply beyond "saving" – which meant there was only one thing left to do with them. In March 1942, Walter Scholtz discerned a significant change in priorities, with the WED now operating more as a weapon of demographic warfare than a vehicle of population growth: "The Germanization of families from other nationalities is not so much about numerically augmenting the German people with persons of Nordic-Dinaric blood as it is about qualitatively weakening the leadership class of foreign nations."[164] On September 16, 1942, while speaking to a group of devotees gathered in the Ukrainian town of Zhytomyr, Himmler spelled out the implications of this reversal with the following mandate: "If you encounter any example of good blood somewhere in the East… you can either win it over to our side or you must kill it. To leave it behind, on the other hand, so that tomorrow another leader emerges… would be a crime against us all, for in the end only our own blood can defeat us."[165] What the Reichsführer-SS sketched out with these words was, in effect, a genocidal crusade against apostates of "Germanic blood" should they prove unwilling to recant. In this sense, the "hunt for good blood" became a hunt in more ways than one: it transformed into a mission to track down and destroy "valuable Nordic elements" abroad as well as at home. Himmler returned to this theme on numerous occasions during the

[162] See the inventories for SS-District West from April 1942 and July 1943 in LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160.

[163] BA R 59/46/47-48: Greifelt to Kaltenbrunner, Hofmann, Dongus, Lorenz, and HSSPFs, December 12, 1942; BA R 59/46/46: Ehlich to SD- and Stapo(leit)stellen, undated. Also see Matthias Hamann, "Erwünscht und unerwünscht. Die rassenpsychologische Selektion der Ausländer," in *Herrenmensch und Arbeitsvölker. Ausländische Arbeiter und Deutsche 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen August et. al. (Berlin: Rothbuch, 1989), 176.

[164] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/189: Scholtz, "Richtlinien für Eindeutschung polnischer Familien," March 5, 1942.

[165] BA NS 19/4009/128-178: Himmler, "Rede in Zhytomyr," September 16, 1942.

later war years, most cogently at a speech to high-ranking Wehrmacht generals in Bad Schachen on October 14, 1943, when he remarked, "Either we win over the good blood that we can use and give it a place within our people, or we must exterminate this blood."[166]

The impetus for discarding, detaining, or eliminating "unsuitable" WED candidates, however, like the practice of deporting those who were incapable of labor, did not originate with the SS leadership; it came from below, where local security forces had already arrested re-Germanizable Poles on account of subversive or anti-German behavior, almost always at the instigation of civilians in their districts. Between June and November 1941, Franciszek Drozdzinski in Wohlde, Jan and Jadwiga Schendel in Bornhagen, and Walenty Zimna in Herzberg were all handed over to the police by their overseers.[167] That autumn, the SD office in Stuttgart reported that the "political hatefulness" of some re-Germanizables in Württemberg had prompted a four-week stretch in Welzheim prison.[168] Friedrich Kersten's betrayal of Leo Grzegorz offers another telling example of the eagerness with which Germans denounced their erstwhile guests. In a letter to the Landrat dated January 23, 1942, Kersten described Leo as a fat, drunken slob, belittled his protestations of illness as "sheer fantasy," and exclaimed, "His entire ethos is un-German!" The same day, the police detained Leo "for refusal to work, insubordination, agitation, and the like."[169] Conflicts with a German overseer also led to the apprehension of Jadwiga Ciupinska in July 1941; the following January, the Gestapo placed her in the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, where she had to wear the red triangle badge that designated political prisoners and "enemies of the regime." In fact, "political Pole" was the most common pretext given for interning WED candidates in the concentration camps (known collectively at the time as "the KZ").[170] Any claim that this was intended solely as a short-term "educational measure" is disproven by the fate of Stanislaus Perdek; transported to Mauthausen on October 24, 1941, he died there a year and a half later of "poor circulation" – one of many euphemisms that camp personnel deployed as a cover for murder.[171] Zdzislaw Lorek was beaten to death by the guards mere days following his internment in Mauthausen in January 1943, and Johann Cierszewski was killed shortly after arriving at the concentration camp in Stutthof that June.[172]

Re-Germanizable Poles accused of "refusal to work" sometimes met a similar end, for the Nazis interpreted "shirking" not as a product of physical exhaustion, but as a hereditary syndrome or "act of sabotage." Once again, the Betriebsführer were nearly always the ones who set the gears of persecution in

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[166] NARA T-175/91/2923-3051: Himmler, "Rede in Bad Schachen," October 14, 1943.
[167] 3/20a/98: Drozdzinski, 6.22.41; 5/33/53: Schendel, 10.6.41; 5/33/89: Zimna, 11.5.41.
[168] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[169] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 1633, Bd. 89: Kersten to Landrat Fulda, January 23, 1942; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 1633, Bd. 90: Gendarmerie Fulda to Landrat Fulda, January 23, 1942.
[170] ITS 0.1/53251592: ITS Index Card on Jadwiga Ciupinska. For other examples, see the Buchenwald Häftlings-Personal-Karte for Stanislaw Furmanek and the ITS index card on Sonja Piotrowska in ITS 1.1.5.35/907719 and 0.1/46352176.
[171] ITS 0.1/45798998: Sterbeurkunde Stanislaus Perdek.
[172] ITS 0.1/39189472: ITS Index Card on Zdzislaw Lorek; ITS 0.1/18766433: ITS Index Card on Johann Cierszewski.

motion. In Heckerhausen, one Wilhelm Homburg sent Jozef Staziak and his wife to the police in July 1942 "because he said that she wasn't sick, but rather just didn't want to work."[173] In September of that year, a certain Frau Kundhart telephoned the Gestapo commander in Stuttgart to complain about the allegedly lackadaisical performance of her housemaid, Hallina Jeske – a "crime" for which the girl spent several days in jail.[174] Sometimes German overseers exploited these conventions to dispose of laborers whom they no longer had any use for. Stanislawa Magdzinska informed the RuSHA in April 1943 that her overseer, Erich Bree, "handed us over to the police when he had no work, and in their presence said the most unbelievable things about us, which don't correspond to reality at all." Bree also filed charges of delinquency against another employee, seventeen year old Wladyslaw Swiercz, whom local constables sentenced to thirty days in prison.[175] In most cases, the Gestapo condemned "work-shy" candidates to a stint in one of the notorious "labor education camps" (*Arbeitserziehungslager*, AELs), which were often just as lethal as the KZ itself.[176] Many did not survive the depredations they suffered there. Stanislaus Rudesko and Stanislaus Piowarski were each incarcerated in the AEL Liebenau in the spring of 1941. By December, Rudesko was dead, and Piowarski would join him a little over a year later.[177]

The disproportionate targeting of women reveals the neurotic sexual motives that infused this campaign of repression, a testament to the politicization of everyday intimacy during the Third Reich as well as its entrapment of ordinary people.[178] This phenomenon must be borne in mind when contemplating why the Nazis sequestered Bronislawa Wlodarczyk in a municipal jail in Frankfurt am Main for having "intercourse with German men."[179] Even when female WED candidates performed their preordained role as "racially valuable mothers," they could not escape the prying eyes and puritanical temperament of the National Socialist regime. When SD functionaries in Düsseldorf found out about the pregnancy of a fourteen year old girl named Walja in April 1942, they locked her up for a month, even though the father was German. For that reason alone, they allowed Walja to keep the child, yet remained circumspect in light of her extremely young age and participation in an extramarital tryst. Six months later, she again came under scrutiny, this time for mingling with Poles and other "suspicious persons." The police now decided to remove Walja from the WED, and warned her that her next offense would lead to indefinite detention in the KZ.[180] Women committed to long-term partnerships with German men were punished with even greater severity if they showed even the slightest whiff of infidelity. This is what

[173] 5/35/40: Staziak, 7.16.42.
[174] 5/35/79: Jeske, 9.19.42.
[175] 5/35/146-147: Magdzinska, 4.5.43.
[176] See Gabriele Lotfi, *KZ der Gestapo. Arbeitserziehungslager im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003).
[177] ITS 0.1/34683232: ITS Index Card on Stanislaus Rudesko; ITS 0.1/32112071: ITS Index Card on Stanislaus Piowarski.
[178] On the power politics involed in the denunciation of women by women, see Vandana Joshi, *Gender and Power in the Third Reich: Female Denouncers and the Gestapo, 1933-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 171-176, 183-186.
[179] ITS 0.1/12296483: ITS Personal File on Bronislawa Wlodarczyk.
[180] LNWD RW 58, Nr. 3476: Akten der Gestapo Düsseldorf.

happened to Olga Skibinska, whom we met in the opening vignette of Chapter Two. Sometime after her resettlement in the town of Sulz, Olga got engaged to a German soldier who was fighting on the Eastern Front when she wrote to the Aussenstelle in May 1942. The regional SS adviser, Hermann Grotz, had reproached Olga for "bad behavior" after her hosts said she came home late at night and "went walking in Stuttgart with a girlfriend and some young men." Offended by these intrusions into her personal life, she nevertheless felt compelled to ask, "If I do my work properly, but the Stuttgart SS is not pleased with my private life, is Obersturmführer Grotz really allowed to send me to a concentration camp?" Olga learned the answer to this question in August 1943, when she was deported to Ravensbrück.[181]

It was the exact inverse of affectionate relationships, of course, that served as the primary cause of these denunciations – not love and compassion, but fear and loathing. The WED exposed the perils of cultural assimilation in a time of war and imperial expansion, when the structures of hegemony almost inevitably undercut any attempt to turn conquered enemies into trusted allies. Having subordinated inductees with appalling brutality, many Germans seem to have feared that they would rise up against them and seek vengeance. They rationalized their own savagery, in other words, by sub-consciously projecting it onto their victims, which seemed all the more justified when inductees did not take the abuse of their overseers lying down. By acting on the urge to retaliate, however, they sealed their own doom, for the state could not side with the subaltern without challenging the entire system of domination. An incident related by Magdalena Kaczorowska on July 30, 1943 makes this reality demonstrably clear:

> Our boss, Herr Übermayer, came over to our house at lunchtime. He insulted my husband and punched him in the face twice, and because my husband fought back, there was a brawl between the two of them. When I placed myself between them to calm things down, the farmer hit me as well. Afterwards, my husband went directly to the gendarme in Pferdling to ask for help. Herr Übermayer phoned the same gendarme, who thereupon arrested my husband as a foreigner and handed him over to the Gestapo in Linz for [inflicting] bodily harm. He has still not returned.[182]

Scenes like this were a hallmark of the quasi-colonial order the Nazis established across the Third Reich by bringing in foreign subjects to toil for Germans on a massive scale. That SS functionaries were no less haunted by visions of revolt is undeniable; that they were frightened in particular of an uprising led by "German-blooded renegades" goes a long way toward explaining why they imprisoned Feliks Grzelka in the concentration camp at Dachau for "anti-state activity" in March 1943, or why they executed the dressmaker Helena Mackowiak for "espionage" in the Berlin-Plötzensee prison in November of that year.[183] On the face of it, the commission of such acts against non-Germans is not all that surprising. What is more noteworthy is that they were perpetrated against foreigners who had been awarded favored status on account of their "racial value." This striking turnaround is the surest indicator

[181] 5/35/5: Skibinska, 5.12.42; ITS 0.1/36253789: ITS Index Card on Olga Skibinska.
[182] 5/35/159: Kaczorowska, July 30, 1943.
[183] ITS 1.1.6.2/10081070: Aufnahmeformular Feliks Grzelka; ITS 0.1/39535723: ITS Index Card on Helena Mackowiak.

of a pivotal bottom-up influence on the trajectory of the Re-Germanization Procedure. One might expect local civil servants and Party officials to share or adopt the viewpoint of constituents in their districts, but the impact of these attitudes also took hold in Berlin and the occupied territories.

Re-Germanizables from Poland were not the only ones the SS turned against either. In a secret directive dated October 3, 1942, Greifelt ordered the Gestapo to arrest all Absiedler from Alsace-Lorraine and Luxemburg who turned down "conditional state subjecthood," declined to move to Lublin, refused to perform labor service, or expressed a desire to return to their homeland, as well as anyone who "demonstrates through other forms of gross insubordination that they consider themselves French and want to remain as such." Those who could no longer work or showed symptoms of "biological inferiority," on the other hand, were earmarked for deportation to the interior of France.[184] As with the exclusion procedure for Polish WED candidates, the idea was to dump "useless" candidates outside the borders of the Reich while confining "racially valuable" dissidents in the concentration camps in order to "render them harmless" and avoid handing them over to the opposing side. Compared to Polish candidates, re-Germanizables from France and the Low Countries could generally expect much better treatment from German employers, who in their handling of forced laborers tended to follow the crass popular credo "East is bad, West is acceptable."[185] That did not protect these people from Nazi security forces, however. The Landrat in Limburg, for instance, asked the Gestapo to enact "coercive measures" against Nikolaus Claude for refusing to sign his citizenship papers.[186] Adolf Krieps, the socialist politician from Luxembourg, was denounced by the mayor of the same town, who opined that "no valuable population increase for the German Reich would be won through the naturalization of the Krieps family." On November 16, 1944, the Gestapo whisked Adolf away to Dachau.[187] By then, the number of "renitent" candidates from Luxembourg had grown to such an extent that the VoMi had to set up a special penal camp near Trebnitz in Silesia just to house them all.[188]

Methods for dealing with the Slovenes took an even more decidedly ruthless turn.[189] Creutz had already started logging "inoperative" and "congenitally ill" candidates in October 1941; several months

[184] BA R 49/73/85-86: Greifelt, "Behandlung und Arbeitseinsatz der abgesiedelten Personen aus Elsass, Lothringen und Luxemburg," October 3, 1942; BA R 59/46/24-27: Brückner to Cassell, November 22, 1944. Also see Tone Ferenc, "'Absiedler': Slowenen zwischen 'Eindeutschung' und Arbeitseinsatz," in *Europa und der "Reichseinsatz". Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938-1945*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (Essen: Klartext, 1991), 208-209.

[185] Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 203.

[186] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1055: Landrat Limburg-Lahn to Gestapo Frankfurt am Main, January 14, 1944.

[187] HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1143: Bürgermeister Limburg to Landrat Limburg-Lahn, February 2, 1944; ITS 0.1/29091699: ITS Index Card on Adolf Krieps.

[188] Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 202.

[189] Greifelt mentioned in the exclusion decree of December 1942 that corresponding regulations for re-Germanizable Slovenes would follow shortly, though nothing in the way of a single formal ordinance to this effect ever actually appeared.

later, Günther Stier sanctioned the deportation of "old and infirm re-Germanizable persons" as well.[190] The HSSPFs and their agents within the VoMi quickly exceeded these parameters, using them as an excuse to cast off "ethnically and politically questionable" individuals. Within weeks, they had shipped so many people to Lower Styria that Stier had to remind them that "the number of active troublemakers and bandits must not be increased through the approval of migrations." By June, these "migrations" had thrown the entire colonization scheme for the area into jeopardy, since returning Slovenes often accosted newly settled ethnic German Umsiedler and thereby created "unpleasant confrontations." In August, Bethge tried to halt the expulsion of re-Germanizables to Slovenia altogether – to no avail.[191] Many of these people intentionally misbehaved or simulated illness in order to ensure repatriation, in part because they were homesick, in part because their employers abused them, but mostly because living conditions in the overcrowded VoMi camps had become untenable. Nutrition, hygiene, and medical care were atrociously poor; as a result, shocking numbers of children and seniors succumbed to disease and malnourishment.[192] Internees also had to endure the sadistic cruelty of SS guards who reacted to any hint of insubordination with naked force and sometimes tormented them without cause. There were stories of commandants who made adolescent boys fight each other for their amusement and flogged children with bamboo switches and riding crops.[193] It is little wonder that re-Germanizable Slovenes fled in droves. Some of them made it all the way back to their homeland and linked up with the partisans.

Inside and outside the camps, many of those who stayed behind persevered in defying every effort to strip away their native ethnic heritage. As time went on, the race and the resettlement experts grew ever more inclined to the standpoint that these people were not worth "saving" either. One prominent VoMi official argued that re-Germanizable Slovenes who had "clearly expressed their anti-German attitude" were fundamentally incorrigible and should therefore not possess any legal entitlements.[194] His colleagues at the EWZ highlighted the ethnic-political dangers inherent to "planting" them in Germany: "They have consistently endeavored to Slovenize local Germans as a means of artificially inflating their national territory and giving their district a purely Slovenian veneer."[195] As early as November 1941, Creutz directed underlings to report all candidates who dodged labor service to the Gestapo; shortly afterwards, the VoMi erected "punitive and educational" wards in each of the

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[190] BA R 49/73/70-72: Creutz to Hofmann, Ehlich, Lorenz, and Seldte, October 23, 1941; BA R 49/73/93-94: Stier to Lorenz and Ehlich, February 3, 1942.

[191] LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160, Bd. 95: Stier to Lorenz and Ehlich, March 27, 1942; BA R 49/3561/7: Stier to Seftschnig, June 1, 1942; BA R 49/73/139: Bethge to Lorenz and HSSPFs, August 24, 1942; BA R 59/106/16-17: VoMi Gauleitung Bavaria to Lagerführer in Bavaria, October 6, 1942.

[192] Entner, "Deportation," 179.

[193] Michael Koschat, "Die Deportation slowenischer Familiem im April 1942. Vorgeschichte, Verlauf, Erinnerung," in *Als Kärnten seine eigenen Kinder deportierte. Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-1945*, ed. Johannes W. Schaschl (Klagenfurt: Hermagora, 2012), 40. Also see page 147 in Schaschl's article of the same name.

[194] BA R 59/57/15: Brückner to Altena, February 2, 1943.

[195] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.

Slowenenlager.[196] In 1942, the police began to track down individuals suspected of political opposition as well.[197] Alois Justin, for instance, went through no less than three different concentration camps between April 1942 and March 1945. His wife's efforts to secure his release ended in vain; Alois never got out. The Gestapo also consigned Simon Dovjak to the KZ for "disobedience"; he did not survive either.[198] The high incidence of escape was another reason for tightening the reins. Himmler and his men were not about to let re-Germanizable "fugitives" augment the communist insurgency in northern Yugoslavia with "valuable Nordic blood," not without first enlisting "the most severe preventative and punitive measures."[199] The case of Johann Stockler reveals what happened to those who got caught trying to return home. Johann absconded from his place of employment in Upper Bavaria in June 1942; upon capture, he was sentenced to five years in the KZ.[200] On another occasion, Gestapo officers in Nuremburg briskly apprehended five individuals "with ties to the bandits" after uncovering their plot to supply nearby camp inmates with false travel permits. "These people will now receive their just punishment," one VoMi official noted.[201] When it turned out that even these grim deterrents did not solve the problem, Himmler ratcheted up the level of violence yet further. After learning in September 1942 that a group of Slovenes had broken out of a VoMi camp in Silesia and "joined gangs near the Croat-German border," the Reichsführer-SS demanded that in the future the HSSPFs should execute all such "fugitives" as well as any accomplices (preferably by hanging) and intern their family members in a concentration camp.[202]

The strategy of terror did not stop there, however. From the beginning, we have seen how the Re-Germanization Procedure developed alongside and influenced other, much larger domains of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik*. It was only fitting, then, that the repressive dynamic which engulfed the WED in early 1942 imbued these policy fields as well, beginning with the million-plus ethnic German Umsiedler whom the Nazis had resettled from across Europe to areas under their control. After all, these people were also stigmatized by Reich Germans as a strange, hybrid Other-group with whom they had little in common, as "outsiders to the fatherland" whose "pedigrees were always suspect" because they had unfamiliar, seemingly retrograde customs, often spoke incomprehensible dialects of German (if they spoke German at all), and had presumably been corrupted through centuries of close contact with non-

[196] BA R 49/73/75: Creutz to Lorenz, November 26, 1941; NARA RG T-81/267/2386322-327: Lorenz to VoMi Lagerführer, February 25, 1942.

[197] See the directives issued by the VoMi Gauleitung Württemberg in NARA T-81/283.

[198] BA R 59/57/55: Justin to VoMi Berlin, January 6, 1945; ITS 0.1/26574530: ITS Index Card on Alois Justin; ITS 0.1/26574532: Sterbeurkunde Alois Justin. On Dovjak, see Entner, "Deportation," 179.

[199] BA R 49/3561/7: Stier to Seftschnig, June 1, 1942.

[200] LOC/NMT, 901, Doc. NO-5544: Eberstein to Landräte in Bavaria (English transcript), June 27, 1942.

[201] BA R 59/57/52: "Tätigkeits- und Stimmungsbericht der VoMi Einsatzführung Franken," unsigned, August 2, 1944.

[202] LOC/NMT, 899-900, Doc. NO-3220: Brandt to Lorenz, Schmauser, and Rösener (English transcript), September 22, 1942.

Germans.[203] Hence, they too were subjected to extensive techniques of social conditioning and cultural homogenization designed to erase their preexisting regional, particularist, and confessional identities (not to mention forced labor and second-class citizenship).[204] Disheartened by the suppression of their traditions and the abominable quality of life in the VoMi camps, discontent among the ethnic Germans grew by leaps and bounds as the war went on. The response was predictable. In late February 1942, the SS instituted a "penal and remonstrative code" for all the Umsiedlungslager in order to stifle unrest and weed out "noncompliant, malicious, and work-shy resettlers."[205] Whereas before VoMi officials had gathered all "agitators" at separate "re-education camps" in Brandenburg and Württemberg, now they were instructed to turn over all serious disciplinary cases to the Gestapo instead. In mid-1942 at the latest, the SS started sending Umsiedler to the KZ as well.[206] The inventory at Dachau listed a total of 336 ethnic German prisoners condemned for party-political and religious dissent, criminal offenses, and "asocial" behavior, as well as for opposing nationalization or rejecting German citizenship.[207] For good measure, Himmler also ordered RKF functionaries in western Poland to accelerate the eviction of all "unsuitable resettlers" from their allocated farms and reduce them to indentured servitude, especially if local Party authorities judged them to be "asocial," "biologically worthless," or "politically unreliable."[208]

There were purges of indigenous "Germans" in the annexed Polish provinces too, where Nazi officials complained time and again that members of the Deutsche Volksliste were "totally politically unreliable" and guilty of "ethnic treason."[209] These allegations were thrown around with particular frequency in military circles, as it quickly became apparent that most able-bodied males from Group 3 had no intention of fighting for *Volk* and fatherland. The army leadership liked to believe that service in the Wehrmacht would bring about a "transformation of these men into conscious Germans" by granting them an opportunity to "prove their worth" and "bind themselves to the German ethnic community."[210]

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[203] Doris L. Bergen, "Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability: Women Outsiders in German-Occupied Europe," in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 274.

[204] Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumsarbeit und Umsiedlungspolitik 1939-1945. Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Auslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006), 141-146. Also see Daniel Mühlenfeld, "Reich Propaganda Offices and Political Mentoring of Ethnic German Resettlers," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism*, eds. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 201-205.

[205] BA RD 12/9: Lorenz, "Straf- und Beschwerdeordnung für die Umsiedlerlager der VoMi," February 25, 1942.

[206] NARA T-81/280/2405772: VoMi Gauleitung Württemberg to Lagerführern in Württemberg, July 14, 1942. Also see Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 201-202.

[207] Alexa Stiller, "Zwischen Zwangsgermanisierung und 'Fünfter Kolonne'. 'Volksdeutsche' als Häftlinge und Bewacher in den Konzentrationslagern," in *Nationalsozialistische Lager. Neue Beiträge zur NS-Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik und zur Gedenkstättenpädogogik*, eds. Akim Jah, Christoph Kopke, and Alexander Korb (Münster: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2006), 110, 122-123.

[208] BA R 49/73/100-101: Hübner, "Anordnung über das Verfahren bei der Absiedlung ungeeigneter Umsiedler," September 8, 1942. This process began in the spring of 1941; see BA R 49/3073/58: Runge to Dolezalek, May 4, 1941.

[209] Diemut Majer, *Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), 244.

[210] USHMMA 15.168M/4/NTN/201/37: "Merkblatt über Wehrpflichtige der DVL Abt. 3 im Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen," September 1, 1943. Also see Gerhard Wolf, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität. Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012), 409-410.

Yet if the Nazis assumed that the military would provide an effective instrument of nationalization, as it had during the Kaiserreich, they were dead wrong. Troops enlisted through the Volksliste often defected to the Red Army or joined the partisans as soon as they had the chance, so much so that the Germans stopped deploying them on the Eastern Front – where they needed manpower the most. In Italy and North Africa, entire units went over to the Allied side without ever firing a shot. Even those who did not desert found all kinds of ways to weaken morale by flaunting their unreconstructed nationalism – most conspicuously by singing Polish hymns while in uniform – and rumors soon surfaced of a shadowy cabal working to undermine the Wehrmacht from within.[211] In the winter of 1941, the army began handing over these "disciplinary cases" to the police – 129 from the district of Ratibor alone – nearly all of whom had been dishonorably discharged for continuing to identify themselves as Poles or refusing to swear the oath of allegiance. On top of all that, many subjects sought to evade their "duty to bear arms" when called up by suddenly retracting their previous affirmations of Germanness. To combat this fiasco, the Gestapo began interning all such "draft-dodgers" in the concentration camps in April 1942.[212] Recruiting non-Germans into the armed forces had proven to be far more trouble than it was worth.

Military conscripts were not the only DVL members living under a cloud of suspicion. One Waffen-SS general opined that most "Germanized Poles" in West Prussia were "unstable personalities" who could only be induced to work through "harsh police intervention." "Their recalcitrant behavior and refusal to work is obvious sabotage," he added, "which is extremely serious here in the East because these people are now Germans."[213] By early 1942, such observations had become commonplace. Himmler stepped in that February, ordering the Gestapo to seize all members of DVL Group 4 who resisted Germanization, as well as those deemed "especially politically troublesome," and transfer them directly to a concentration camp. While insisting that these "actively Polonized persons of German descent" had to be "won back for Germandom," he nevertheless decided that "if this goal cannot be achieved, at the very least they must be prevented from again supporting the Polish nation."[214] The same protocol soon encompassed individuals from other categories of the DVL as well. Theodor Kühn, for instance, was detained on March 16, 1942 and thereafter removed from Group 3. Having fought for in the Polish army as a junior officer in September 1939, Kühn freely admitted that he had only enrolled in the Volksliste to protect his parents. "Still today," he confessed, "I feel loyal to and proud of the Polish national flag." The presiding Gestapo agents considered him so hopelessly "infected" with Polish patriotism that they

[211] USHMMA 15.168M/NTN201/38: Kurz to Regierungspräsident Bromberg, December 5, 1942. Also see Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1945* (Berlin: Akademie, 1987), 498.

[212] LOC/NMT, 733-734: Doc. NO-3096: Mildner to Gestapo Kattowitz (English transcript), April 21, 1942.

[213] BA NS 19/1748/4: Reinhard to Petri, July 20, 1942.

[214] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/150-157: Himmler, "Behandlung der in Abt. 4 der DVL eingtragenen Personen," February 16, 1942; USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/230-233: Streckenbach to SD- and Stapo(leit)stellen, July 1, 1942.

transferred him to Auschwitz.[215] As with the re-Germanizables and the Umsiedler, the broad involvement of the state in virtually every aspect of their lives increased points of potential friction with DVL entrants while making their behavior all the more likely to hasten increasingly merciless retaliation.

The SS, the Nazi Party, and the civil administration each worried even more about inhabitants with "German blood" who remained outside the fold. Already in late October 1941, Gauleiter Forster had the DVL branch offices in Danzig-West Prussia record the names of all "persons who refuse to submit an application even though they are eligible for admission on the basis of their ancestry and racial fitness" so that the SD could register these people and "take appropriate measures against them in the future if necessary."[216] The onset of these "appropriate measures" came on February 16, 1942 – the timing is crucial – when Himmler authorized the apprehension of any "person of German descent" who neglected to sign up for the Volksliste. If said individuals still had not applied after a period of eight days, they went straight to a concentration camp.[217] On many occasions, Gestapo officers went through considerable trouble to convince the persons in question to change their minds. "German blood," after all, could not be forfeited so easily. In March 1942, they implored the five Bukalla sisters to put aside "national fanaticism" and embrace their "racial heritage." The Bukallas refused; the following May, they disappeared into the KZ.[218] In Wincentowo, the police jailed Adolf Ernst that same month because he would not cut ties with his Polish common-law wife. "Even though I was not brought up as a Pole," he told his captors, "my present feelings and thoughts are those of a Pole, and I will never be German again." Adolf died in prison before the Gestapo even had a chance to send him to Stutthof.[219] These proceedings were by no means isolated; they occurred in the counties of Brodnica, Wąbrzeźno, and Grudziąz, and in towns like Tuchola, Pelplin, and Unisław.[220] If incarceration failed to bring resistors "back to their origins," annihilation became the sole objective. That was clearly the intended fate for those condemned to the living hell of Auschwitz, where ethnic German prisoners suffered particular viciousness and were sometimes tortured to death under the pretense of an interrogation.[221] Such atrocities represented the most literal possible manifestation of Himmler's dictum, "All Germanic blood to us – or be wiped out."[222]

When looking at these concurrent waves of violence in retrospect, not to mention all the setbacks that preceded them, one might think that the Nazis would have just terminated the "hunt for good blood"

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[215] Jan Grabowski and Zbigniew R. Grabowski, "Germans in the Eyes of the Gestapo: The Ciechanów District, 1939-1945," *Contemporary European History* 13, no.1 (February 2004): 28-29.

[216] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN196/2: Moebes to DVL Zweigstellen in Danzig-West Prussia, October 30, 1941.

[217] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/162: Himmler, "Erlass des RFSS betr. Deutschstämmige, die ihre Eintragung in die DVL nicht beantragen," February 16, 1942.

[218] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 499.

[219] Grabowski and Grabowski, "Germans in the Eyes of the Gestapo," 28-29fn.

[220] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 499.

[221] Stiller, "Zwangsgermanisierung," 112-113.

[222] Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002), 86.

altogether without further ado. Indeed, the historian Robert Koehl argued long ago that Himmler and his minions essentially lost interest in Germanization policy as a whole in the spring of 1942. More recently, Michael Esch has claimed that they abandoned the aim of assimilating "ethnic aliens" in the Old Reich around the same time, while Mark Mazower contends that, due to popular resistance in the occupied territories, re-Germanizable Poles had become "vanishing breed" by 1943.[223] Nothing could be further from the truth. The advent of the exclusion procedure did not spell the end of the WED. On the contrary, it strengthened the Nazis' resolve to push forward.

Though certainly designed in part to eradicate "undesirables," the principal motive behind this onslaught of systematic terror was to bring recalcitrants into the German body politic, not to keep them out. The Nazis did not by and large see any inherent contradiction between the goal of integration and the use of violence to achieve this aim. It is crucial to remember Greifelt's proviso that "Resistant behavior can only lead to a removal from the re-Germanization program when all attempts to alter this behavior and all related educational measures have proven ineffective."[224] That is why Bethge angrily reprimanded Dongus in May 1942 for consenting to the ejection of one Tadeusz Niedzielski, who was only guilty of leaving his workplace without permission. He reminded the chief of the Aussenstelle that "exclusion from the Re-Germanization Procedure is contingent upon my agreement in each individual case," and instead proposed confining Niedzielski to a labor camp for several months. The police could only adjudicate demotion to "P-Pole" status if this punitive term failed to yield an "improvement" or if Niedzielski committed another infraction.[225] Security operatives on the ground paid little mind to this technicality, at least until Ehlich reiterated that "refractory or politically insubordinate behavior does not necessitate the exclusion of the person in question or their family members from the WED."[226] All in all, candidates whom the Gestapo imprisoned for disobedience or political nonconformity usually got out after a relatively brief period of time. The SD in Frankfurt am Main approved the release of Nikolaus Pietryga following a two-month stint in the AEL Oberndorf because "he gave no further reasons for complaint in regard to conduct, attitude, and work performance."[227] The Slovene Vinzenz Aubel, whom we met at the beginning of this chapter, qualified for parole on account of the "good behavior" he displayed over the course of several weeks at the AEL Moosach. "The objective of education," one official concluded, "has been fully achieved."[228] The concentration camp Hinzert frequently operated in a capacity similar to that

[223] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1957, 56; Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1998), 246; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 215-216.

[224] BA R 59/46/35-37: Greifelt, "Strafmassnahmen und Herausnahme aus dem Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," June 22, 1942.

[225] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/87: Bethge to Dongus, May 30, 1942.

[226] BA R 59/46/46: Ehlich to SD- and Stapo(leit)stellen, undated.

[227] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11375: SD Frankfurt am Main to Waldeck and Stroop, July 1, 1944.

[228] BA R 49/3562, Bd. 20: Gestapo Munich to Eberstein, February 11, 1943.

of the AELs. Wladislaus Stankiewicz was sent there in the fall of 1942 for refusing to work and listening to foreign radio broadcasts, but he obtained a discharge two months later.[229] In the end, only a minority of re-Germanizables ever saw the inside of a German correctional facility, and even fewer were actually banished from the initiative (124 as of March 1943).[230]

Far from triggering a halt to the Re-Germanization Procedure, the introduction of *Herausnahme* and "punitive educational measures" coincided with the onset of a radical new phase of expansion. The "hunt for good blood" in Western Europe did not begin in earnest until *after* 1942, when the Nazis simultaneously turned their gaze to unexplored horizons in the East as well, as we shall see in subsequent chapters. Why would they widen the scope of their endeavors when the initiative had already produced such disastrous consequences? The answer to this question is actually rather simple: the results were far from uniformly negative, and Himmler's race and resettlement experts could point to tangible signs of "progress" as an index of popular approval and a justification for staying the course. While enlarging the project enhanced their power by default and reflected a built-in institutional impulse for growth, the cooperation of Germans who did seek to integrate WED candidates into their communities reaffirmed the propriety of what these men were doing. Many re-Germanizables themselves, moreover, continued to play ball. It was this factor that led the SD in Stuttgart to claim in September 1941 that 85 to 90 percent of the "racially valuable" Poles in Württemberg were "worthy of the honor of Germanization," not to mention "hardworking, compliant, upstanding, thrifty, domesticated, and surprisingly clean."[231] While acknowledging the presence of a few "bad apples," the re-Germanization adviser in Berlin made similarly encouraging remarks: "The character flaws of Germanizable Poles are well-known here on the basis of lengthy observation. I must explicitly emphasize, however, that there have also been many positive experiences."[232] Though warning that the situation was "still very much in flux," HSSPF Heissmeyer seconded this assessment: "It is certainly the case that a series of Germanization attempts have miscarried, but it is also the case that others have been brought to full fruition."[233]

A comprehensive report on the WED authored by Hans Ehlich at the Reich Security Main Office in December 1942 confirms that events in the provinces, though disconcerting, hardly shattered the optimism of the program's architects. Ehlich did not conceal the fact that nearly all candidates had a difficult time adjusting to their newfound circumstances in Germany (especially the Slovenes). Nor did he mince words in his disclosure that employers often "paid no attention to the fulfillment of their appointed ethnic-political duties" and "based their treatment of these ethnic aliens on their own false opinions."

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[229] ITS 0.1/12516960: ITS Personal File on Walter Stankiewicz.

[230] For example, see the inventories for SS-District West in LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160. Also see Grotz's testimony in LOC/NMT, 807-808. The figure of 124 comes from BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943.

[231] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.

[232] BA NS 2/82/168-169: Hinsch to Heissmeyer, September 29, 1942.

[233] BA NS 2/82/167: Heissmeyer to Hofmann, September 30, 1942.

Quick to blame the hardships re-Germanizables suffered on the "ignorance" of German supervisors and the "independent actions of incompetent offices," he was nonetheless confident that they could be surmounted through a stricter selection of workplaces and the dissemination of more precise guidelines to state and Party agencies. He had nothing but contempt for those Poles who opposed Germanization, vilifying them as "lazy, impudent, irascible, licentious, dirty, and lousy," as individuals with "a propensity for thievery and lawlessness," whose "typical Polish characteristics" were mainly attributable to hereditary defects. Outside of "a small amount of hopeless cases," however, Ehlich found that most inductees had "rapidly adapted themselves to German conditions and settled in very well." According to a sample survey based on the responses of 216 families, 62 percent matched this description, as opposed to 28 percent who were still "hesitant to commit" and 10 percent who remained "unwilling to Germanize." Ehlich's report cited a multitude of factors as evidence for the successful "acclimation" of the majority: that they strove to "perfect their knowledge of the German language," decorated their homes with swastika flags and pictures of Hitler, submitted "numerous appeals to retrieve their relatives for Germanization," and "proclaim in their letters that they belong to the German *Volk*." To substantiate these conclusions further, he referenced individual examples of conviviality, such as Stanislaus Wrobel's "close rapport with his comrades," the nurturing of Bronislawa Kosmala's "interest in German culture," and Kasimierz Procyszyn's "good reputation" among the villagers of Oberhausen.[234]

It goes without saying that Ehlich painted an overly sunny portrait of the status quo, and many colleagues did not hesitate to dispute his findings. HSSPF Mazuw found it "inconceivable that the statements in the report of the RSHA could be presented to the Reichsführer-SS."[235] Creutz was also "unable to agree fully" with Ehlich's analysis, particularly as it pertained to the candidates' supposedly pro-German orientation.[236] Hofmann took offense at the linking of resistance with biological inferiority – a not so subtle insinuation that the Eignungsprüfer had rendered faulty racial verdicts – and went on to criticize the SD for being far too eager to crack down on alleged subversives and impose assimilation at the barrel of a gun. As he put it in a letter to Dongus in January 1943, "The question cannot be seen from the perspective of the Security Police, but rather from the principle of blood. The Germanization process must take place organically. If we procure the Germanizables at the Aussenstelle according to their hereditary fitness, appearance, and racial value, then we must also place the same points of view in the foreground of the Germanization procedure itself."[237] Such utterances speak to the disquiet that "*Volkstumspolitik* with the big stick" stirred within the RuSHA. One official at the Race Office had

[234] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/11-21: Ehlich, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Eindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Fremdstämmigen," December 19, 1942. Also see the introduction to this report in BA NS 19/1780/2.

[235] BA NS 19/1780/18-19: Mazuw to Fähndrich, February 26, 1943.

[236] BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943.

[237] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/7: Hofmann to Dongus, January 26, 1943.

already protested the growing involvement of SS security forces in September 1942, lamenting that a "tactical arrangement" with the SD was only necessary "to head off outright domination by the Reich Security Main Office."[238] For Hofmann, consolidating authority over the initiative into the hands of the more tolerant RuS-Führer offered the best remedy for what plagued the WED, not crude repression.

These power struggles and ideological disputes were nothing new, of course. The RuSHA and the SD had continuously sparred over the right to classify foreigners, one trumpeting the primacy of racial-anthropological criteria, the other favoring a greater consideration of ethnic-political factors. These debates finally came to a head at a meeting of representatives from the two agencies on August 18, 1943. Ehlich and Krumey blasted the RuSHA for trying to block their men from taking part in the assessments and demanded complete control over the "reincorporation of non-Germans." Schultz, Schwalm, and Dongus countered by arguing that they possessed preeminent authority to arbitrate on "issues having to do with maintaining purity of the blood," because "integrating families of non-German nationality" produced "constant variations in the racial substance of the Germans."[239] The conference ended in an uneasy stalemate, with both sides at least outwardly conceding that they needed each other. But neither the race examiners nor the security apparatchiks ever questioned the fundamental premise of the WED itself. And neither actually contested the intermediate position of the RKF: "while it is sometimes necessary to discipline obstinate persons with the greatest severity and keep them in line through coercive measures… the large mass of the people included in the Re-Germanization Procedure have thoroughly proven themselves and thereby supplied an infusion of valuable blood to the German peasant class."[240]

It was the Reichsführer-SS, of course, who elaborated in the most evocative terms why the "hunt for good blood" would proceed no matter what: beyond the biological implications, it had far-reaching military and strategic relevance as well. Himmler envisioned the Second World War not just as a fight to the death with "Jewish Bolshevism," but as the final cataclysmic episode in a perpetual struggle with "Asiatic" hordes bent on conquering Europe and destroying Western civilization, an army of "subhumans" whose lineage stretched backwards in time from the Soviets to the Turks, Tatars, Mongols, and Huns. The key to victory in this titanic clash lay in harnessing the "power of the blood." It was the destiny of the "blond race" to "dominate the earth," he prophesied during a gathering of SS leaders in June 1942, but this triumph would not come to pass until National Socialism had unified all "people of Germanic blood."[241] Allowing the Slavs to profit from this vital resource would be tantamount to "a

[238] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[239] BAL B 162/26345/126: "Aktenvermerk über die Konferenz zwischen Vertretern des RSHA und RuSHA," unsigned, August 18, 1943.

[240] BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943.

[241] Quoted from Agnes F. Peterson and Bradley F. Smith, eds., *Heinrich Himmler. Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen* (Munich: Propyläen, 1974), 157, 161.

knight lowering his sword before the enemy."[242] At his Zhytomyr speech in September, Himmler amplified the meaning behind this turn of phrase: just as "an Attila was born in this seething mass of millions of subhumans," so "a Genghis Khan, a Tamurlane, a Stalin can emerge from lost traces of Nordic-Germanic-Aryan blood that float in this mass and which alone can give rise to powers of leadership and organization."[243] In his superb biography of Himmler, Peter Longerich elegantly captures the crux of this apocalyptic worldview: "The war against the Soviet Union, against Bolshevism itself, the entire Nazi crusade, as it were, was in fact the outcome of accidentally 'lost' Germanic blood."[244]

Himmler's cosmology found its most terrifying outlet in the Nazis' chief blueprint for postwar colonization and demographic engineering in East-Central Europe: the General Plan for the East (*Generalplan Ost*). The most gigantic scheme of ethnic cleansing ever conceived, the plan foresaw nothing less than the destruction of entire Slavic nations through the enslavement, expulsion, and murder of some forty-five million "non-Germanizable elements" – Poles, Czechs, Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Belarusians, Latvians. With nothing but his pen, the plan's main author, Konrad Meyer, condemned nearly all of these people to death by attrition in the frozen wastelands of Siberia and the Arctic, while awarding their homelands to a projected eight to ten million ethnic German colonists.[245] Even beyond all that, however, the General Plan East *also* anticipated the largest enterprise of cultural genocide in history. As Ehlich explained in December 1942, Germanic settlement in Eastern Europe during past millennia had deposited huge stores of "valuable Nordic blood" throughout the region; all of the indigenous non-Jewish populations would therefore have to be "sifted" in order to "harvest" those "of good race."[246] The estimates for how many people would qualify for Germanization directly corresponded to the obverse percentages of those targeted for elimination: 15 to 20 percent of the Poles, 15 percent of the Lithuanians, 25 percent of the Belarusians, 25 to 30 percent of the Russians, and 50 percent of the Latvians, Estonians, and Czechs respectively.

The Re-Germanization Procedure supplied the template for this nightmarish scenario. Meyer himself was intimately familiar with the WED; he worked in the RKF Staff Main Office, right down the hall from Greifelt and his aides, and kept in close contact with Ehlich, who drafted his own version of the plan and fed Meyer statistical data on the selection of re-Germanizables in the Warthegau (courtesy of the

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[242] Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 112-113.
[243] BA NS 19/4009/128-178: Himmler, "Rede in Zhytomyr," September 16, 1942.
[244] Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 263-264.
[245] BA R 49/157a: Meyer, "Generalplan Ost. Rechtliche, wirtschaftliche und räumliche Grundlagen des Ostaufbaus," May 28, 1942. For secondary literature, see Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Hitlers Ostkrieg und die deutsche Siedlungspolitik. Die Zusammenarbeit von Wehrmacht, Wirtschaft und SS* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1991); Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940-1944* (Berlin: Birkhäuser, 1993). Also see the collection of essays and documents in Mechthild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher, and Cordula Tollmien, eds., *Der "Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1993).
[246] Ehlich, "Die Behandlung des Fremden Volkstums," December 10, 1942, in Rössler, Schleiermacher, and Tollmien, *Der Generalplan Ost*, Doc. 2.

UWZ leaders Krumey and Höppner).[247] Erhard Wetzel, another high-ranking Nazi ideologue who contributed to the plan, divulged plainly that incoming reports on the WED shaped his thinking. That is why, like Meyer, he called for the heads of anyone who resisted assimilation within the framework of the Generalplan Ost.[248] By the spring of 1942, with the experience of less than thirty thousand "specimens" to go by, the Re-Germanization Procedure had morphed into a pilot program for the absorption of millions into the National Socialist New Order.[249]

The radicalization of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* in 1942 demonstrates that the axis of identity politics under Hitler's regime did not revolve around a clear-cut polarity of inclusion versus exclusion. If nothing else, the militant animus that consumed the Re-Germanization Procedure during this fateful year shows that the definition of Germanness under the Third Reich was extremely tenuous, highly variable, and hotly contested, all the while underlining the extraordinary degree to which grassroots attitudes molded the parameters of debate. The implementation of the WED on the home front brought Nazi fantasies of racial irredentism into ever greater conflict with the ethnocentric format of nationalism favored by the populace at large, a contingency shaped far more by everyday social interactions than any discernible pattern of ideological diffusion from above or reception from below. By creating a space where ordinary Germans could work out meta-categories of race and nation for themselves in proximity with non-Germans, the program became a medium of exchange between microhistorical encounters and macrohistorical patterns. When exercising their power to construct the boundaries of German society, civilian participants altered the course of policy-making at center and periphery, not through reserved indifference, but by actively challenging the underlying discursive paradigms of Nazi ideology. Himmler and his experts reacted by channeling and codifying the mentality of their fellow citizens, casting their own lexicon of biopolitical security over homegrown vernaculars of intolerance, and turning popular opinion into a rationale for persecution. Yet just as developments on the ground convinced the Nazis to sacrifice "defective" or unrepentant "bearers of lost German blood," the same interplay between state and non-state actors also encouraged them to continue their fantastical search regardless of the cost. In the next chapter, we will explore how each side of this equation culminated in perhaps the most atavistic of the Nazis' many crimes against humanity: the large-scale abduction of foreign-born children.

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[247] BAL B 162/339/63-79: Höppner to Ehlich and Eichmann, September 2, 1941. Also see Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 467; Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 243-246.

[248] Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in Czesław Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan* (Munich: Saur, 1994), Doc. 16.

[249] Greifelt counted 17,000 from Poland in June 1942 in addition to between 11,000 and 12,000 from Slovenia. See BA R 59/46/35-37: Greifelt, "Strafmassnahmen und Herausnahme aus dem Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," June 22, 1942. June 22, 1942. Also see Greifelt to Seftschnig, May 28, 1941 in *Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Entnationalisierungspolitik in Slowenien 1941-1945*, ed. Tone Ferenc (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1980), Doc. 76. Ferenc's annotation for this document lists a minimum figure of 7,785 from Lower Styria as of spring 1942. Dr. Helmut Gläser, an SD officer stationed in Klagenfurt, recounted in his postwar testimony that between 3,000 and 4,000 had come from Upper Carniola as well; see Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 323.

Chapter Eight: Janissaries

"The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold those who think alike in higher esteem than those who think differently."

–Friedrich Nietzsche

"Many will say to me: 'How can you be so cruel as to take away a child from its mother?' To this I reply: 'How can you be so cruel as to leave a gifted future enemy for the other side, who will one day slay your sons and grandsons?'"

–Heinrich Himmler

On June 9, 1942, the village of Lidice was erased from the face of the earth. In reprisal for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by Czech operatives, and acting under explicit orders from Hitler and Himmler, Nazi security forces rounded up the adult males and shot all 173 of them before the day was out. They then proceeded to set the village ablaze and demolish the remaining buildings. Meanwhile, the surviving inhabitants were herded into a school in the nearby town of Kladno, where the children were separated from their mothers and subjected to a racial examination performed by RuS-Führer Johannes Preuss. On June 12, SS functionaries transported the women by rail to the concentration camp at Ravensbrück; for many, it would be their final destination. The children, however, went to the UWZ complex in Łódź. The following day, Walter Dongus, chief of the RuSHA Aussenstelle, picked out the seven new arrivals Preuss designated for re-Germanization and handed them over to a special juvenile home in Pastuchów. From here the shadowy organization known as Lebensborn e.V. (Fount of Life Society) would take over custody of these "racially valuable youths" and farm them out to German foster families. The remaining eighty-one children ended their days at the extermination camp Chełmno, where they were gassed later that year.[1]

Almost immediately, the destruction of Lidice became an iconic and globally recognizable symbol of Nazi barbarism, and it has remained one ever since. The specific fate of the children Preuss selected, however, features far less prominently in our collective historical memory of this event, as does its location within a much larger framework of racial-demographic engineering and a much longer timeline of nation- and empire-building. Although scholars have reconstructed the Nazis' campaign to kidnap and Germanize foreign-born children in meticulous detail, they have heretofore failed to delineate the enduring trends and immediate circumstances that undergirded and precipitated it, let alone looked at what these phenomena can tell us about the evolution of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* as a whole. The present chapter seeks to rectify this oversight by exploring practices of "child-stealing" (*Kinderraub*)

[1] LOC/NMT, 680-682. Also see ITS 4.1.0.1/82447596: Böhme to Krumey, June 12, 1942; ITS 1.2.7.9.1/82189541-546: Affidavit of Hermann Krumey, September 30, 1947.

in Nazi-occupied Europe, situating them within a broader historical and institutional context, and uncovering the crucial role that German civilians played in their genesis and development.

The National Socialists, of course, were not the first political movement to fixate on children as emblems of a projected utopian future, nor were they the first to exploit them for the purposes of biological rejuvenation. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, youth have occupied a central place in virtually every nationalist tradition from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, almost invariably providing a ready-made vessel for the inscription of cultural identities. This was particularly true in the multilingual borderlands of East-Central Europe during the *fin-de-siècle*, when the push to demarcate and solidify ambiguous ethnic borders transformed education into the premier site of contestation for the competing claims of patriotic activists. Here children represented the key to the nation's survival as well as a potential force of instability, their impressionable nature leaving them all the more exposed to the "corrupting" influence of rival ethnic groups. In Bohemia, for instance, nationalists on both sides of the divide were outraged by the custom of fostering Czech children with German-speaking parents.[2]
In Prussian Poland, the suspicion that native Catholic clerics sought to pry German children away from their national heritage prompted repeated legislative attempts to standardize German as the sole language of instruction in all primary schools. The famous pedagogue Otto Berthold captured the highly charged atmosphere surrounding this issue when he warned that "Every German child who speaks a word of Polish out of friendliness to a Polish child ought always to say to himself, 'Now a piece of me, and hence a little piece of Germany, has been conquered by the Poles."[3] Hyperbole aside, Berthold's statement illustrates how the battle for the "hearts and minds" of children in the decades preceding the First World War infiltrated the most intimate spheres of private life and progressed in accordance with an understanding of reproduction that was at once political, sociological, and sexual. In their depictions of Polish women as emasculating *femmes fatales*, German nationalists encoded inter-ethnic marriages as an existential threat to the perpetuity of *Volk* by suggesting that such a formidable maternal presence guaranteed the children produced by these unions would grow up to be Poles rather than Germans.[4]

We see something eerily similar at work in concurrent polemics on childhood in Europe's overseas colonies, where the regularity of interracial concubinage and the resultant prevalence of "mixed blood" children heightened fears of deracination. Throughout the far-flung territories they controlled, the British, French, Dutch, and German empires all introduced eugenic measures that purported to safeguard the integrity of the "White race" by classifying "half-castes" according to their "aptitude." They also

[2] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 3-4.

[3] Martin Broszat, *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik* (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1963), 136-137; Richard Wonser Tims, *Germanizing Prussian Poland: The H-K-T and the Struggle for the Eastern Marches in the German Empire, 1894-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 102-103.

[4] Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 87.

aimed to reinforce the European sense of Self among these children (and white colonial youths more generally) through a wide range of pedagogical discourses and communal taboos that instilled them with the "proper attitude" of emotional detachment from "subordinate races." A firm belief in racial hierarchy coincided with the assumption that Europeans could be "infected" with "primitive" mentalities through social interaction with "inferior peoples."[5] This convergence of biological and cultural anxieties formed the backdrop to the systematic assimilation policies initiated by governments in North America and Australia in the late nineteenth century, when tens of thousands of children were forcibly removed from their aboriginal parents, brought up in state orphanages, parceled out to white families, and encouraged to marry "full-blooded" Europeans, which would presumably help "breed out their color" and absorb their progeny into the dominant Anglo-Saxon stock (the French did something very similar in Indochina).[6]

Although there is little evidence to suggest a direct connection, the Nazis envisioned almost exactly the same type of approach to the question of "half-breeds" and foreign children of "German descent." In the influential think piece they penned in November 1939, Eberhard Wetzel and Gerhard Hecht dealt with this topic at length. To begin with, they recommended transferring "politically neutral" families of German-Polish ancestry to the Reich in order to bring the children into a "German environment" and cut off their contacts with Polish relatives "to the greatest extent possible." The next step entailed the removal of "biologically healthy" orphans from Polish-Catholic institutions, along with all children aged ten and under whose parents were "racially valuable yet ethnically non-Germanizable elements."[7] Seven months later, Himmler borrowed these ideas in his "Some Thoughts" memorandum, in which he declared that the parents of "racially impeccable" Polish children would be given a choice: either hand over their sons and daughters or come to Germany with them and become German citizens. If they picked the former option, Himmler reasoned that the consequent psychological distress would dissuade them from having any more children; if they chose the alternative, the regime would obtain a potent means with which to keep them in line: "the love of their child, whose future and education depends on their loyalty." Regardless of the decision, each eventuality precluded "the danger that through

[5] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 2-6, 144; Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare, and the Decline of the British World, 1869-1967* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13-15, 150-153. Also see the collection of essays in Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds. *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[6] On North America, see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995), 1-5, 335-338. On Australia, see Robert Manne, "Aboriginal Child Removal and the Question of Genocide, 1900-1940," in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 220-231. For a comparative approach, see Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 25-86, 149-192. On French Indochina, see Christina Elizabeth Firpo, *The Uprooted: Race, Children, and Imperialism in French Indochina, 1880-1980* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 39-60.

[7] BA R 186/35: Wetzel and Hecht, "Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebiete nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte," November 25, 1939.

such persons of good blood the subhuman people of the East retain a threatening leadership class on par with our own." While acknowledging the traumatic implications of his proposed course of action, the Reichsführer-SS had no qualms about its rectitude: "However cruel and tragic each individual case may be, this method is still the mildest and best… We truly believe that this is our own blood, which has flowed into a foreign nationality due to the errors of German history, and we are convinced that our worldview and our ideal will find resonance in the racially kindred souls of these children."[8]

Despite this pronounced emphasis on Poland, however, the National Socialists first undertook to "recover" foreign-born children not in the East, but in Northern and Western Europe, beginning with Norway. That such attentions should grace this particular country did not shock anyone at the time, what with the widespread contemporary belief that the peoples of Scandinavia and the Low Countries belonged to a larger "Germanic family of nations" linked by age-old "racial affinities" in addition to the obvious linguistic ones. For that reason (among others), the Norwegians, like the Danes, retained a certain measure of autonomy over domestic affairs under German rule, their distinctive language and national culture targeted only for an extremely gradual "absorption" into the "ethnic organism" of a "Greater Germanic Reich" (Himmler reckoned with a timetable of fifty to one hundred years). But there were some well-placed Nazi functionaries who did not want to wait that long, and one unintended consequence of military occupation gave them plenty of evidence with which to plead their case. The HSSPF in Norway, Friedrich Wilhelm Rediess, wrote to Himmler from Oslo in December 1940 to report on the growing frequency of extramarital sexual liaisons between German soldiers and Norwegian women, recommending that the state assume responsibility for any offspring begotten by their "coupling" in order to "supply racially valuable blood to our ethnic community." Convinced that such children were likely to become "renegades," Rediess underscored the danger of allowing them to grow up as Norwegian citizens with a familiar argument, taking a myth typically found within German mindscapes of Eastern Europe and extrapolating it to Scandinavia. "If no supervisory measures are undertaken on our part," he warned, "then we will necessarily augment the circle of persons who fight with all means against the fusion of the Norwegian people… so that instead of achieving the desired assimilation, we encourage the anti-German element to grow." Rediess had already devised a very specific solution: "the establishment of German-led maternity homes (Lebensborn)," which would bring these illegitimate children under the tutelage of the SS and help "win over" the families of their Norwegian mothers.[9]

The Lebensborn Society was in many ways the ideal outfit to handle this kind of venture. Founded by Himmler in 1935 as a refuge for unwed German mothers and their babies (the vast majority

[8] NARA T-175/119/2646113ff: Himmler, "Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten," May 20, 1940.

[9] Volker Koop, *"Dem Führer ein Kind schenken". Die SS-Organisation Lebensborn e.V.* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007), 190-192. Also see Kåre Olsen, *"Vater: Deutscher". Das Schicksal der norwegischen Lebensbornkinder und ihrer Mütter von 1940 bis heute* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).

of them fathered by SS men), it presided over a number of childcare centers run by a cohort of experienced physicians and social workers dedicated to elevating the birth rate and accustomed to operating under a shroud of secrecy. Overseen directly by the personal staff of the Reichsführer-SS, Lebensborn also shared close organizational ties with the RKF and the RuSHA (Otto Hofmann sat on its board of directors), which assessed the "racial and hereditary value" of all prospective patients prior to admission.[10] What was more, given the perception that they would otherwise "be lost to Germany," the agency's leadership showed "a special interest" in converting "expectant [Norwegian] mothers who are physically and biologically valuable" into "full-fledged Germans," and believed the situation in Norway afforded "a unique opportunity to transplant Nordic women in large numbers into the Reich."[11]

To preempt the "Norwegification" (*Vernorwegerung*) of ethnically mixed children, as well as to "foster and maintain the racially valuable genetic makeup of the German *Volk*," Himmler approved Rediess' proposal in the early spring of 1941, with an eye toward deploying the youths in question as missionaries of Germandom in Norway once they came of age.[12] Hitler formally endorsed the program a little over a year later, issuing a decree on July 28, 1942 that obligated German authorities to assist in the "preservation and advancement of racially valuable Germanic stock" by subsidizing the care of children sired by Wehrmacht personnel as well as their Norwegian mothers. By October 1943, the Lebensborn Society had opened nine separate maternity homes in Oslo, Trondheim, and other cities across Norway.[13] In addition to the roughly two thousand Norwegian women who came to Germany along with their small children, the RuSHA imported at least 250 toddlers and infants whose mothers remained in Norway, dispatching them to the Lebensborn homes at Hohe Horst near Bremen and Kohren-Sahlis outside Leipzig. Although Lebensborn chairman Max Sollmann later claimed that the mothers had signed a "voluntary written declaration" giving these children up for adoption, it appears that many were brought to the Reich against their wishes.[14]

Himmler and his henchmen planned to do the same thing in the Netherlands, for Hitler's decree of July 28, 1942 applied to the offspring of German soldiers in that country as well. But here they ran into much tougher opposition from the Nazi Party. If the Reichskommissar for occupied Norway, Josef

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[10] For background information on Lebensborn, see Georg Lilienthal, *Der "Lebensborn e.V.". Ein Instrument nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1985); Dorothee Schmitz-Köster, "*Deutsche Mutter, bist du bereit…" Der Lebensborn und seine Kinder* (Frankfurt am Main: Aufbau Taschenbuch, 2010); Thomas Bryant, *Himmlers Kinder. Zur Geschichte der SS-Organisation "Lebensborn e.V." 1939-1945* (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2011).

[11] BA NS 48/29: Hofmann, "Aktennotiz betr. eine Besprechung mit SS-Stbf. Tietjen," May 12, 1941. Also see Lynn H. Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 275.

[12] BA NS 2/78/221: Hofmann to Rediess, July 29, 1941.

[13] Isabel Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop of Good Blood: The Kidnapping of 'Racially Valuable' Children and Nazi Racial Policy in Occupied Eastern Europe," in Moses, *Genocide and Settler Society*, 255-256; Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 176, 182-183.

[14] ITS 6.1.2.16/82491408-432: ITS Child Search Branch, "An Outline of the Structure and Practices of Lebensborn for Guidance in Child Search," unsigned, undated; ITS 4.1.2.5/81795391: Interrogation of SS-Stbf. Otto Lang, unsigned, undated; ITS 4.1.2.8/81796049-50: Heise to UNRRA Paris, February 19, 1947. Also see Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop," 255-256.

Terboven, had grudgingly acquiesced to their demands, his counterpart in Holland, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, did everything he could to spurn them, particularly by assigning responsibility for implementing Hitler's directive to the NSV and its ambitious leader, Erich Hilgenfeldt – Himmler's main rival for control over this field of policy.[15] Like the Reichsführer-SS himself, Hilgenfeldt had an abiding obsession with harvesting the progeny of "racially valuable ethnic aliens" to replenish the strength of the German nation and offset its mounting losses on the battlefield. As the principal welfare organization of the Third Reich, the NSV was much better equipped to carry out the Germanization of foreign children than Lebensborn ever could be.; it possessed vastly greater financial resources, a much larger workforce, and a far more extensive infrastructure of childcare facilities (nurseries, orphanages, schools, hospitals, etc.), not to mention a grid of outposts that kept tabs on young Volksdeutsche throughout Europe. Contrary to what one might expect, it was the NSV, not the state youth offices (*Jugendämter*), which orchestrated the adoption and fostering system in Germany. When it came to the logistics of racial consolidation, the SS was heavily overmatched and Himmler knew it, which is precisely why he relied on Hilgenfeldt's cooperation and why the NSV maintained close contacts with the RKF, the EWZ, and the VoMi. As one postwar investigator put it, "The NSV had connections with every source where children could come from within the framework of 'Strengthening German *Volkstum*' and was therefore directly involved in the deportation and Germanization of children."[16]

In the Netherlands, however, Hilgenfeldt's men had the upper hand and a head start, and they were in no mood to share power with Lebensborn, an entity they deemed superfluous. Although NSV officials in Holland professed a willingness to negotiate, Seyss-Inquart released a supplementary directive on March 1 that effectively excluded Lebensborn from the entire process. Despite persistent efforts by RuS-Führer Hermann Aust to open a natal clinic in Nijmegen for the illegitimate children of local Waffen-SS recruits, the project never amounted to much because provincial administrators withheld the requisite funding.[17] The SS did not have much better luck to the north in Denmark, though here it was the army and the ministerial bureaucracy that stood in the way, having determined that it would be imprudent to excite popular opinion with autocratic demands for guardianship over the children of German soldiers and Danish women – even though they were no less inclined to view their indigenous subjects as a "racially Germanic and ethnically kindred *Volk*." Instead, a bilateral commission comprised of delegates from the Wehrmacht and the Danish Ministry of Justice adjudicated questions of paternity and alimony in

[15] Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 164-165; Koop, *Dem Führer*, 205-207.

[16] BA NS 48/30: NSV Hauptamt to Kreisamtsleiter in Hesse-Nassau, October 26, 1942; ITS 4.1.2.12/81797170-175: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Memorandum on the Function and Activities of the NSV," unsigned, October 1948; ITS 4.1.2.12/81797131-135: ITS Child Search Branch, "Report on the NSV," unsigned, undated. Also see Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 236, 254-261.

[17] BA NS 2/72/23: Aust to Sollmann, March 12, 1943; Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 166-167, 180.

such cases. By the time Lebensborn officials finally obtained clearance to set up a base in Copenhagen in the fall of 1944, it was far too late to inaugurate any kind of meaningful operation.[18]

While the army command in Denmark consistently blocked Himmler's aspirations, the military governor of Belgium, General Alexander von Falkenhausen, turned out to be much more amenable. In late 1942, he permitted Lebensborn to found a maternity home and kindergarten at the Wégimont castle near Liège (the so-called Heim Ardennen), which as of mid-1943 housed twenty unmarried "mothers of Germanic blood" along with thirty-four infants and toddlers, most of them fathered by Flemish volunteers for the Waffen-SS.[19] In March of that year, Falkenhausen's administrative chief, Eggert Reeder, wrote to Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick and pressed for the immediate naturalization of these women and children so as to "preserve [their] racially valuable stock for the Reich."[20] Frick agreed in principle and sanctioned the award of German citizenship on a case-by-case basis, yet he remained somewhat skeptical and advised caution, citing Hitler's recent statement that "ethnically alien girls who engage in extramarital affairs with German soldiers are not always racially high-grade… hence, the children who stem from these unions are not necessarily a desirable population increase for the German *Volk*."[21] Falkenhausen had no such reservations. Convinced that the offspring of German soldiers and Belgian women "for the most part" constituted "racially valuable Germanic stock," he persuaded his superiors in September 1943 to extend the purview of Hitler's July 1942 decree to cover Belgium as well. Although Lebensborn had to split its duties with the NSV and the Wehrmacht decided whether or not to grant financial assistance to individual applicants, Falkenhausen allocated the task of racial-biological screening to the RuSHA, in this instance represented by Richard Jungclaus at the Waffen-SS recruitment station in Brussels.[22] Still, the relatively low number of subjects involved and the humbling reality of subordination to other governmental bodies meant that SS officials expecting the same level of support and freedom they enjoyed in Norway could only react with disappointment to the state of affairs in Belgium.

In France as well, the success of Lebensborn depended on the extent to which state, Party, and military leaders were prepared to collaborate with the SS, and here too the results were marginal at best. In Alsace and Lorraine, the Gauleiter decisively repelled the agency's attempts to take charge of single mothers and illegitimate or orphaned children, preferring to team up with the NSV instead. As they saw it, compulsory enrollment in the Hitler Youth (for boys) and the League of German Maidens (for girls)

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[18] Erich Thomsen, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark 1940-1945* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971), 192, 223; Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 183-184. There was a Lebensborn home in Luxembourg too, but it also never amounted to much; see Koop, *Dem Führer*, 207.

[19] For information on Heim Ardennen, see Stacy Hushion, "Intimate Encounters and the Politics of German-Occupied Belgium, 1940-1945," (PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 2014).

[20] BA R 43-II/137a/113: Reeder to Frick, March 31, 1943.

[21] Koop, *Dem Führer*, 203-204.

[22] BA R 43-II/1525/108: Falkenhausen to Lammers, September 19, 1943. Also see Werner Warmbrunn, *The German Occupation of Belgium, 1940-1944* (New York: Lang, 1993), 130-131.

would suffice to ensure that all "German-blooded" youngsters avoided the temptations of French culture and matured into devoted National Socialists.[23] Circumstances were quite different in the occupied interior of France – and that made some Nazi elites nervous. In late May 1942, Reich Health Leader Leonardo Conti estimated that some fifty thousand babies had been born due to sexual encounters between German soldiers and French women. Yet what truly worried him was the fact that the widow of a French general had taken it upon herself (apparently with funds from the Vichy regime) to tend to their upbringing, which meant they would eventually be "lost to Germany." Conti asked Himmler to intervene, noting casually that "Germans living in fruitless marriages would gladly accept these children."[24]

The Reichsführer-SS, in fact, had already aired his own thoughts on the matter. During a meeting with Hitler and Bormann on April 5, he broached the idea of conducting annual forays into the French heartland to capture "racially valuable" children and send them to boarding schools in the Reich, where Nazi instructors would "divert them from their accidental French nationality" and promote an awareness of their "membership in the great Germanic *Volk*." Hitler remarked that the conservative and staunchly Catholic values of many leading French nationalists (their "religious petit-bourgeois tendencies," as he put it) would make it extremely difficult to sell them on the idea of handing over their children for the "biological improvement" of Germany's "racial stock" – a backward-looking disposition he believed would obstruct any effort to "salvage Germanic elements from the claws of the ruling class." The Führer agreed in principle, however, that "it would be a severe blow if France were deprived of its leadership stratum of Germanic offspring."[25] Nevertheless, the schemes outlined by Conti and Himmler never really got off the ground. A shortage of trained attendants and medical equipment delayed the opening of a Lebensborn maternity home in France until February 1944. Even then, the Heim Westwald, located at Ménier castle near Chantilly, contained no more than twenty women and their newborns, though nearly all of these children were plucked from their mothers willy-nilly and either delivered to the Lebensborn nursery in Steinhöring or entrusted to German foster parents.[26]

It was agents of the Nazi Party, not the SS, who became the main perpetrators of the hunt for children of "good blood" in Western Europe. That they were not just after "half-German war babies," moreover, is evidenced by the activities of one institution in particular: the Reichsdienststelle Kinderlandverschickung (KLV). Jointly managed by the NSV and the office of Reich Youth Leader

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[23] Alexa Stiller, "On the Margins of the Volksgemeinschaft: Criteria for Belonging to the Volk within the Nazi Germanization Policy in the Annexed Territories, 1939-1945," in *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism*, eds. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 244. Also see Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 255, 258.

[24] BA NS 48/30: Conti to Himmler, May 29, 1942.

[25] Gerhard Weinberg, ed. *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953), 303.

[26] ITS 4.1.2.8/81796206: ITS Child Search Branch, "Report on Heim Westwald," unsigned, undated; ITS 6.1.2.16/82491408-432: ITS Child Search Branch, "An Outline of the Structure and Practices of Lebensborn for Guidance in Child Search," unsigned, undated.

Baldur von Schirach, the KLV was originally designed to evacuate German children from cities threatened by aerial bombardment and relocate them in the countryside. What started out as a domestic welfare program, however, soon morphed into an implement of Germanization policy. As Allied air attacks grew ever more destructive over the course of the war, the Nazis looked to presumably safer locales in neighboring countries, above all in the lands adjoining the western borders of the Reich. Here the KLV set up a number of camps that functioned simultaneously as shelters for German refugees and intake centers for "racially valuable foreigners" on their way to Germany – the latter usually identified on the basis of their "Nordic-looking" or "Aryan" appearance. Many of these children came from pro-Nazi families in Belgium and the Netherlands that voluntarily entrusted them to the NSDAP, though most of the non-German minors who passed through the hostels of the KLV were brought there via far more devious methods. Nazi functionaries often lied to the parents, assuring them that their sons and daughters would merely visit Germany as foreign exchange students and return after a brief stay. In other instances, they commandeered the children of individuals who had been detained or executed by the Gestapo as "enemies of the state." Most of these subjects wound up at NSV facilities in the Reich, where the adolescents lived under a strict regime of political indoctrination, cultural Germanization, and paramilitary drill. There were around four hundred of these sites in Württemberg alone, and at least two thousand of the children who resided there were Belgian or Dutch citizens, looked after by a pool of instructors and social workers from the Hitler Youth and other Nazi associations, some of whom shared the same nationality as their young wards.[27]

In the final analysis, however, the various "child reclamation" programs implemented in the lands to the west and north of Germany paled in comparison to what went on in the occupied territories of East-Central Europe, where a far more bitter history of ethnic conflict magnified the imperative to enervate the biological substance of foreign nations by robbing them of their youth. In Poland, which would soon emerge as the epicenter of Nazi kidnapping operations, this legacy was fresh in the minds of local Volksdeutsche, who had complained for decades about a systematic attempt to Polonize orphans of German descent.[28] In the autumn of 1939, such accusations became gospel among Nazi administrators stationed in the Warthegau, and from very early on there were rumors of a plan in the works to bring these children back to their "German roots." When months went by and still nothing in the way of a coordinated initiative had materialized in Berlin, a few fanatical provincial officials decided to take matters into their own hands. Foremost among them was Dr. Herbert Grohmann, medical supervisor at

[27] ITS 4.1.2.12/81797145-146: ITS Child Search Branch, "Report on the KLV," unsigned, undated; ITS 4.1.2.12/81797179-175: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Memorandum on the Function and Activities of the NSV," unsigned, October 1948. For background on the KLV, see Gerhard Kock, *"Der Führer sorgt für unsere Kinder". Die Kinderlandverschickung im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997), 1-22, 144-148, 307-343; Julia S. Torrie, *For Their Own Good: Civilian Evacuations in Germany and France, 1939-1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 53-56.

[28] See the testimony of Wilhelm Gräbe in LOC/NMT, 1016-1017.

the Public Health Office in Łódź, who began putting his extensive training in racial and hereditary biology to use in early 1940 by evaluating hundreds of children from nearby municipal orphanages. Convinced that Polish welfare agencies had deliberately placed "racially valuable" orphans only with Polish foster parents, Grohmann argued fervidly for the transfer of such children to households in Germany. Like many other Nazi functionaries in occupied Poland, he justified this policy by framing it as a continuation of age-old trends from the annals of European history: "It was always the purpose of the state to get rid of the minorities within its boundaries through special measures that would destroy alien ethnic groups… Either they would be assimilated or they would be eliminated down to the last person. The aborigines are going to get the second version."[29]

Grohmann and like-minded colleagues got the ball rolling, but pressure on regional authorities to commence with the "extraction" of "German-blooded" orphans also came from another, more unexpected source. Exasperated by the stringent qualifications and convoluted protocols for acquiring foster children and fed up with the interminable backlogs and waiting lists created by limited availability, German couples in the Reich began appealing to government agencies in the Warthegau instead of going through the normal channels. By January 1941, incoming requests of this kind had grown to such proportions that the Nazis felt they could no longer afford to ignore them. As one prefect in Łódź noted, "There is a strong and widespread demand for foster children, but no supply… We must strive to reduce this considerable shortage through the re-Germanization of suitable children."[30] Though aware that Grohmann had discovered a large number of "racially valuable specimens" for this express purpose, NSDAP youth officials in Poznań were reluctant to move forward without first obtaining sanction from Himmler.[31] The Reichsführer-SS wasted little time in bestowing his imprimatur; on June 14, 1941, he sent Gauleiter Greiser the following message: "I consider it proper for us to collect racially superior small children from Polish families and raise them in special homes… we must then consider giving such children to childless families of good race."[32] That August, Creutz elaborated Himmler's intentions in another letter to Greiser: "There are a great number of children in former Polish orphanages who must be regarded as the offspring of Nordic parents on account of their racial characteristics. These children must be returned to Germandom." Almost as an afterthought, Creutz mentioned the possibility of also including "children with good racial qualities whose Polish parents are still alive."[33] After a complicated series of negotiations

[29] NS 48/29: Grohmann, "Verwaltungsbericht der Abteilung Erb- und Rassenpflege," December 15, 1941. The quote comes from Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 132. For information on Grohmann, see his personnel files in BDC RS/B5331 and SSO/033A.

[30] USHMMA 05.008M/7/32: Gaujugendamt to Stadtjugendamt Litzmannstadt, January 7, 1941; USHMMA 05.008M/7/32: Lindner to Gesundheitsamt Litzmannstadt, January 29, 1943.

[31] Ines Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität. Die gewaltsame "Eindeutschung" von polnischen Kindern in der NS-Zeit* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), 41-42.

[32] BA NS 19/2621/1: Himmler to Greiser, Heydrich, Wolff, and Hofmann, June 14, 1941.

[33] BA NS 2/57/140: Creutz to Greiser, August 12, 1941.

that lasted throughout the fall of 1941, Greiser's administration issued provisional guidelines for the "Germanization of Polish orphans" in December.[34] That same month, his emissaries met with representatives from the RKF, the RuSHA, and the Interior Ministry.[35] The resolutions agreed upon at this conference became the basis for Himmler's Ordinance 67/I, released on February 19, 1942, which at long last granted Nazi functionaries in the Warthegau a license to seize Polish children at will.[36]

During the first stage of the operation, the Landräte registered all children in their districts between the ages of two and twelve who resided in Polish orphanages or with Polish foster parents and submitted their names and addresses to Dr. Fritz Bartels, head of the Gau Youth Office in Poznań.[37] The legal guardians of these children then received an official summons to present them for a routine medical checkup – a seemingly innocuous request that only aroused suspicion once word got out about what actually happened to those who complied.[38] "When we arrived," young Slawomir Grodomski recalled, "my mama was ordered to return home and I was kept there."[39] Protesting this injunction was futile, as Feliska Dzieginska witnessed firsthand: "I was told that I had to leave my child behind… thereupon the official immediately called in a German woman, who disregarded my screams, snatched the child from my arms, and walked out."[40] Public wariness naturally increased as these kinds of stories spread, leading the Germans to resort ever more frequently to strong-arm tactics. When one suspicious relative showed up without her niece to ascertain the true purpose of the subpoena, she was thrown out and threatened with arrest unless she came back promptly with the girl in tow.[41] If foster parents declined to appear on the scheduled date, female social workers from the NSV were dispatched with policemen at their side to retrieve the children in question – if necessary by force. Described by natives as "stony-hearted robots," these Brown Sisters (so-called for the color of their Victorian-style uniforms) considered such actions to be part and parcel of their duty to advance the "consolidation of Germandom in the East."[42] Evaluating and redistributing foreign-born children, as Wendy Lower has recently pointed out, thus offered a prime arena for German women to participate in the "racial reordering" of occupied Europe.[43]

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[34] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 42-43.

[35] BA NS 2/58/95: Hofmann to Brandt, April 17, 1942.

[36] BA R 186/35: Greifelt, "Anordnung 67/I," February 19, 1942. In order to keep re-Germanizable families together, Himmler forbade the admission of individuals under the age of 16 into the WED, though some of the girls employed as housemaids were younger than that; see IPN Fond 358/246, Bd. 36: Weithase to Arbeitsamt Litzmannstadt, May 19, 1942. To be sure, this project did have the ulterior motive of isolating young women from the influence of foreign relatives, especially with respect to Slovenes, though they were still usually recruited on a voluntary basis, not forcibly removed from their families.

[37] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447498-499: Cropp to Greiser, March 11, 1942.

[38] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447501: Gaujugendamt Wartheland to Landrat Schroda, September 9, 1943; LNWD Gerichte Rep. 0256, Nr. 230, Bd. 83: Amtskommissar Ostweder to Wojtyczka, February 19, 1944.

[39] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 99-100.

[40] NARA/NMT M894/15/Doc. NO-5256: Affidavit of Feliska Dzieginska, undated.

[41] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 245.

[42] Richard C. Lukas, *Did the Children Cry? Hitler's War against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1994), 115.

[43] Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin-Harcourt, 2013), 37.

Although the terms of Ordinance 67/I applied specifically to orphans, the Nazis quickly expanded beyond these parameters and began taking young boys and girls away from their natural parents as well, starting with illegitimate children of ethnically mixed descent. In January 1942, one SD officer called attention to the growing incidence of sexual relations between German men and Polish women and pushed for more effective measures to secure the resultant offspring: "Previously the children in almost all cases remained in the care of the Polish mother… It must be acknowledged, however, that the begotten children have 50% German blood, and if we perpetuate the current state of affairs, than their blood will be lost to Germandom."[44] Some of his colleagues reacted with indifference to this outcome, arguing that it was "untenable" to assert that "abandoning persons of German descent would supply *Polentum* with German blood" and an "eventual addition to the resistance movement" because the Polish partners almost always stemmed from "the lowest and most primitive strata of the population."[45]

In a nutshell, the issue produced a discourse in miniature on the nature of interracial amalgamation and the question of whether "German blood" would counteract "inferior traits" or irrevocably lose its potency in the exchange. And the solution the Nazis came up with is quite telling; they resolved to give parents a chance to marry (if the RuSHA and the SD approved) and, after the expiration of obligatory prison sentences, admit these new "families" into either the DVL or the WED.[46] At the same time, they also elected to separate some "half-breeds" from their progenitors immediately in order to remove them from an "alien social environment." Because the Gau Youth Office assumed legal guardianship over all illegitimate children of "50% German descent," Bartels always reserved the right to add them to the pool of "racially valuable youths" earmarked for Germanization in the Old Reich.[47] The German judiciary system proved to be more than willing to enforce this dictate too. In December 1941, for instance, the district court in Łódź directed Janina Rutkiewicz to relinquish parental custody over her infant son, Henryk, whose father was an ethnic German. The verdict of the presiding magistrate stated, "Although this measure is fully in accordance with the child's best interests, his mother has resisted it with all her energy. She has therefore denied her child future educational and professional opportunities and deprived the German ethnic community of valuable German blood. Through her contrary attitude toward this measure, she neglects the child's spiritual well-being by placing the maternal instinct of her race ahead of his best interests."[48]

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[44] USHMMA 15.021M/2/15/5-10: Damzog to RSHA, January 17, 1942.

[45] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/33-38: SD Litzmannstadt, "Meldungen betr. Illegitime Ehegemeinschaft zwischen Deutschen und Polen," sig. illegible, March 30, 1942.

[46] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 27: Klinger to Christmann, December 21, 1942; BA NS 47/30/8-9: "Entwurf betr. illegitime Ehegemeinschaften zwischen Deutschen und Polen," unsigned, February 10, 1943.

[47] BA NS 47/34: Harders, "Aktenvermerk über die Besprechung im Reichsjustizministerium," March 10, 1943; ITS 4.1.0.1/82447476: Bartels to Jugendämter in Wartheland, December 3, 1942. Also see Hans-Christian Harten, *De-Kulturation und Germanisierung. Die nationalsozialistische Rassen- und Erziehungspolitik in Polen 1939-1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1996), 306.

[48] USHMMA 05.008M/7/12: "Beschluss des Amtsgerichts Litzmannstadt," unsigned, December 8, 1941.

Despite the bureaucratic sophistication involved in these policies, "child-stealing" in western Poland often proceeded in a much more informal, de-centralized fashion, and in many instances amounted to straight-up thuggery. It was not just that the race examiners could choose from among the litter of orphans whose parents had been arrested, enslaved, or murdered by German occupation forces; Nazi officials took to picking up random youngsters off the street, often luring them with promises of bread, candy, and treasure, just like any common kidnapper would.[49] Henryk Strzelczyk, eight years old at the time, remembered how one day an automobile pulled up and parked as he played with friends on the boulevard near his home; a pair of Germans got out, packed the boys into the car, and drove off. On another occasion, SS men burst into a Polish school unannounced and collected six to eight pupils from each class, all of them blond-haired and blue-eyed.[50] Most notorious of all were the Brown Sisters of the NSV, who prowled the countryside in search of "Nordic-looking" children and sometimes targeted entire communities, leaving a trail of emotionally devastated mothers in their wake. In the summer of 1943, a group of these women descended on the village of Rogozno with a retinue of police and in one fell swoop apprehended over twenty children, some of whom would never be seen or heard from again.[51] And then there were the ordinary civilians who directly contributed to the abduction campaign by informing state officials of potential finds whom they knew personally or coveted for themselves.[52]

No matter how they fell into German hands, all abductees underwent a rigorous racial selection procedure. The Gau Youth Office kept in close contact with the RuSHA Aussenstelle, where most of the examinations were performed by Dongus or his deputy, Herbert Weithase, though they also took place at a variety of other locations (orphanages, camps, schools, administrative offices, military hospitals), which provincial civil servants made available to the team of Eignungsprüfer that traveled around the counties of the Warthegau to screen incoming minors.[53] The protocol for these evaluations conformed almost identically to the methodology the RuSHA used to classify adults.[54] As one Lebensborn official later attested, "The selection of Polish children intended for Germanization was determined by outward racial appearance alone. Nobody cared at all about any possible German origin of these children."[55] Once the Eignungsprüfer were finished with them, "racially valuable" subjects moved on to the Public Health Office in Łódź for a medical and hereditary-biological inspection, which brought them face to face with Dr. Herbert Grohmann, a grotesquely menacing figure in virtually every recollection of the encounter.

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[49] Lukas, *Did the Children Cry?,* 114-115.

[50] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 96-97.

[51] Roman Hrabar, Zofia Tokarz, and Jacek E. Wilczur, *Kinder im Krieg – Krieg gegen Kinder. Die Geschichte der polnischen Kinder 1939-1945* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1985), 194.

[52] ITS 3.3/84325862: Emerich to Polish Red Cross Warsaw, April 20, 1949.

[53] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447498-499: Cropp to Greiser, March 11, 1942; ITS 4.1.0.1/82447501: Gaujugendamt Wartheland to Landrat Schroda, September 9, 1943.

[54] BA NS 2/161/92-98: Klinger, "Bewertung der rassischen Merkmale an Kindern und Jugendlichen," August 16 1944.

[55] NARA/NMT M894/15/Doc. NO-4822: Affidavit of Maria Heinz-Wisswede, undated.

With his "specimens" standing at attention in orderly rows, he went down the line, cane in hand, conducting aptitude exercises that supposedly elicited the presence of congenital illnesses.[56] When this ritualistic battery of testing was over, children who failed to meet the required standards of "racial fitness" were sent back to their previous residences or confined to juvenile detention centers.[57] Those declared "capable of Germanization" were registered once again with the Gau Youth Office, this time under their new German names, and escorted to transit camps in and around Łódź, where they would await relocation to one of several "assimilation homes" in the Warthegau.[58]

The Germanization process began at these institutions. Over a period usually lasting between six weeks and three months, the children received intensive training in the German language and attended regular lectures presided over by the Hitler Youth.[59] Separation from the outside world and from loved ones in particular represented another key strategy for achieving the "desired educational effect." Parents who made inquiries about the whereabouts of their sons and daughters were told bluntly by German officials that they would have no further contact with them, and those who persisted sometimes wound up in a concentration camp.[60] When a few assiduous relatives figured out where their children were being held by consulting local police registries, the Interior Ministry ordered subordinates to cease entering the names of child abductees into the public record.[61] The "assimilation homes" also functioned as sites of continuous observation. At the main facility, Gaukinderheim Kalisz, the renowned child psychologist Dr. Hildegard Hetzer composed a detailed behavioral profile for each inmate, which in turn went into the final decision on whether to send them to Germany for adoption.[62] She described eight year old Zyta Sus, for example, as "dirty," "undisciplined," and "fidgety," as "developmentally challenged… not due to a lack of intellectual talent, but because of her uninhibited impulsivity." The implication, of course, was that children like Zyta did possess "biological value," yet needed a stern hand to keep them in line. While the matron of the home, Johanna Zander, believed that all of her young charges were "of pure German descent," and that some were "much more valuable than many German children," this supposition did not stop her from beating those who disobeyed her.[63] Whenever Bartels felt confident that a subject was sufficiently ready for integration into German society, the Gau Youth Office passed them on to the SS,

[56] Roman Hrabar, Zofia Tokarz, and Jacek E. Wilczur, *The Fate of Polish Children During the Last War* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1981), 188. Also see the testimony of Slawomir Gradomski in LOC/NMT, 1002-1005.

[57] ITS 6.1.2.16/82491345-349: Affidavit of Johanna Zander, undated.

[58] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447509-512: Viermetz to Tesch and Ebner, September 16, 1943. Grohmann sometimes performed his evaluations in these transit camps. The first major "assimilation home" was located in Bruckau (Bruczków), though it closed down shortly after the operation began. The center of gravity then shifted to Kalisch.

[59] See the testimony of Maria Hanfova in LOC/NMT, 1033-1037.

[60] Koop, *Dem Führer*, 175; Höpfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 44, 100-103.

[61] BA NS 48/30: Frick to Regierungspräsident Litzmannstadt, December 10, 1942.

[62] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447498-499: Cropp to Greiser, March 11, 1942.

[63] ITS 6.1.2.16/82491345-349: Affidavit of Johanna Zander, undated; Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 108-109, 111-113.

and this is where the Lebensborn Society came in.[64] Several of the agency's senior employees, most notably Inge Viermetz, routinely traveled to the Warthegau to coordinate the transportation of selected youths to the Reich.[65] The first convoys departed sometime in the early summer of 1942; after that, they left Kalisz for Germany in intervals of about six weeks. Most of the children went to the Lebensborn maternity home at Bad Polzin in Pomerania (twenty already resided there by July of that year); the rest were dispersed among other intake centers in Bavaria, Saxony, and Austria.[66]

However, the Warthegau was not the only province in Poland where the Nazis sought to "reclaim" children of "good blood," and the SS was not the only game in town. In late 1941, the race inspectors also began screening Polish-speaking orphans in Upper Silesia and farming them out to local ethnic Germans. Oskar Geigle, the SD delegate attached to the DVL branch office in Katowice, received a brief from his superiors in December of that year which stated, "An adoption of Polish children by Germans can only take place if these children are evaluated by a commission of the RuSHA. If the children are claimed as a racially desirable population increase, then nothing more stands in the way of an adoption… Although the racial evaluation must be decisive, the adoptive father must also guarantee that the children will be raised in the political and ethnic spirit of National Socialism."[67] One RuSHA functionary in Berlin mentioned in September 1942 that similar measures were being planned for Danzig-West Prussia.[68] Nevertheless, in these provinces it was the NSV that established itself as the dominant authority over "child-stealing." Although Hilgenfeldt's agents collaborated with the SS in the Warthegau, he was not happy about Himmler's intrusion into a policy field that he felt rightly belonged under his jurisdiction, as it generally did in Western Europe. The release of Ordinance 67/I in February 1942, therefore, set the stage for a further round of conflict between the two men. A month later, Hilgenfeldt met with Viermetz in Berlin and presented her with a directive from the Nazi Party Chancellery naming the NSV as the sole governmental body responsible for "securing population growth" through the acquisition of "racially valuable youths" in the incorporated eastern territories[69] The SS countered in July by having the Interior Ministry publish a circular that granted the exact same status to Lebensborn.[70] As usual, Hitler declined to pick a side; the compromise he brokered during a conference with Himmler and

[64] BA R 186/35: Greifelt, "Anordnung 67/I," February 19, 1942.

[65] BA NS 19/229: Viermetz to Brandt, May 8, 1942; NARA/NMT M894/15/Doc. NO-4822: Affidavit of Maria Heinz-Wisswede, undated.

[66] Gudrun Schwarz, *Die nationalsozialistischen Lager* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1990), 100-101. Also see Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 211; Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 64-65, 114. At first, Lebensborn was only supposed to accommodate minors between the ages of two and six, with the older children earmarked for state-run boarding schools, though by 1943 the agency had assumed responsibility over all the "Germanizable Polish orphans" Bartels sent to Germany from the Warthegau.

[67] USHMMA 15.007/9/113/129: SD Kattowitz to Geigle, sig. illegible, December 4, 1941.

[68] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[69] Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 202-203.

[70] BA NS 19/353/17: RMdI, "Runderlass betr. elternlose Kinder in Polen," sig. illegible, July 15, 1942.

Hilgenfeldt in September 1942 quickly fell apart amid renewed jockeying for power.[71] This dispute was never settled; control over which outfit had preeminence ultimately devolved to the Gauleiter, and while Greiser nimbly partnered with both, Forster and Bracht favored the NSV.[72]

The Nazi Party, in other words, ran its own parallel kidnapping operation in occupied Poland. By the end of 1942, Hilgenfeldt's subordinates had erected a huge network of orphanages in the Warthegau where the Brown Sisters collected "ethnically endangered" children and shipped them to boarding schools in the Reich.[73] In West Prussia as well, the NSV became, as one contemporary news article put it, "a valuable instrument of Germanization."[74] Another publicity piece touted the achievements of a youth camp outside the town of Świecie, one of many such institutions in northern Pomerelia, where "a lively crowd of good-looking, mostly blond children" strove to overcome the "damaging influences of their parents and relatives" with the help of dedicated German teachers. "In the faces of these youths," the author proclaimed, "we see the descendants of colonists who settled this land centuries ago."[75] The NSV footprint in Upper Silesia was even more formidable. The state reformatory in Grodków, for instance, housed around six hundred adolescents and teenagers at any given time, namely the sons and daughters of native Silesians whom the police had arrested or deported. Although some of these "pupils" emphatically refused to discard their Polish nationality (and faced ferocious discipline as a result), by April 1943 Nazi administrators believed that most of them were "linguistically and culturally prepared to enter the German ethnic community."[76] Grodków was not the only establishment of its kind in Upper Silesia either. When a joint SS-NSV task force took over the Catholic boarding school in Bogucice in October 1942, the new German trustee had his predecessor imprisoned for exerting "too much of a Polish influence over the children." He then selected 150 students to remain under his tutelage, and six months later transferred them to an unknown destination.[77] It is highly probable that they went to Germany. By 1945, NSV facilities in Bavaria contained around one thousand Silesian children, most of whom told Allied soldiers (in Polish and German) that the Nazis had forcibly removed them from their homes. And that was just in Bavaria. Although the overall figures for Danzig-West Prussia are largely unknown, by the end of the war the NSV had seized at least 8,500 children from Łódź, Katowice, and their surrounding environs, presumably identifying them with the help of specialists from the Racial Policy Office of the NSDAP.[78]

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[71] BA NS 2/71/34: Hofmann to Ehlich, October 23, 1942.
[72] Lilienthal, *Lebensborn* 204-207.
[73] Ibid, 197-198. Also see ITS 4.1.2.14/81797462-463: Whiting to U.S. Army Assistant Chief of Staff, April 26, 1946.
[74] Helmut Schaeffer, "Tatsachen geben uns recht. NSV-Einrichtungen – wertvolle Eindeutschungsinstrumente im Rahmen der Volkstumspolitik des Gaues Danzig-Westpreussen," *NS-Volksdienst* 10 (1943): 29-32.
[75] Wilhelm Löbsack, "Das Leben als Lehrmeister," in *Die Volkstumsfrage im Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen*, ed. Wilhelm Löbsack (Danzig: Gauschulungsamt der NSDAP, 1942) 27-29.
[76] Hrabar, Tokarz, and Wilczur, *Kinder im Krieg*, 168-169, 190; Harten, *De-Kulturation*, 310-311.
[77] ITS 4.1.2.14/81797467-468: Troniak, "Report on Interviews with Sister Cassiana," February 5, 1946.
[78] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 505.

What may seem surprising is that a significant number of these youths came from ethnic German families, and here a word of caution is in order. We must be careful not to reify externally imposed national categories as if they were innate or objective phenomena. As we have seen time and again, the line between German and non-German in the borderlands of East-Central Europe remained incredibly permeable, and it is wholly invalid to contend that child abductees actually "belonged" to one nation or another (though many clearly did see themselves in such terms). Bearing that in mind, because the NSV had a specific mandate to provide for the welfare of all Auslandsdeutsche, Hilgenfeldt's men showed little reticence about confiscating children from "unreliable" parents who *they* perceived to be German or "partly" German.[79] Naturally enough, this prerogative frequently led them to target the offspring of intermarried couples. "If your father was German and your mother was Polish," one boy recounted, "the NSV took you away from them and made you speak German."[80] They went far beyond that though. Across the annexed Polish provinces, it was up to the Brown Sisters to determine what constituted custodial negligence, and they employed a variety of ideological justifications to take children away from their biological or adoptive parents: that the guardians in question did not offer the guarantee of a pro-German or National Socialist upbringing; that they did not speak German in their households; that they stood under the "influence of the Polish milieu"; that their "racially alien ancestry" or "asocial tendencies" would poison future generations.[81] The NSV combined these pretexts with the same economic and moral grounds that practically every modern welfare state invokes to disempower impoverished, careless, or abusive parents – and such accusations were no doubt true in at least some cases.[82] In each respect, Nazi officials serving abroad in the East exported bureaucratic standards and practices that social workers had developed and routinized throughout the 1930s in Germany itself.[83]

This same aggregate of factors characterized the deliberations of German personnel as they extended the "civilizing mission" of National Socialism eastward into the General Government (the unannexed rump of eastern Poland). Here the NSV obtained a virtual monopoly over the welfare of native ethnic Germans as early as August 1941, working hand in glove with volunteers from the NS-Frauenschaft and the BDM.[84] At the outset, these women were only authorized to "register those [children] who are malnourished or whose health is at risk due to their dreadful economic conditions

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[79] BA NS 48/30: NSV Hauptamt to Kreisamtsleiter in Hessen-Nassau, sig. illegible, October 26, 1942; ITS 4.1.2.12/81797170-175: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Memorandum on the Function and Activities of the NSV," unsigned, October 1948.

[80] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 503-504.

[81] ITS 4.1.2.12/81797170-175: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Memorandum on the Function and Activities of the NSV," unsigned, October 1948. Also see Harten, *De-Kulturation*, 304 and Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 49-51.

[82] See, for instance, the case of Stefanie Kordiasch in ITS 4.1.0.1/82447486: Jugendamt Litzmannstadt, "Aktenauszug für das Kind Stefanie Kordiasch," sig. illegible, November 10, 1944.

[83] Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation*, 236, 254-261.

[84] BA NS 37/1005: Frank, "Erlass der Regierung des Generalgouvernements über die Durchführung der volkspflegerischen Arbeiten," August 25, 1941.

under Polish rule and accommodate [them] in boarding schools for four to six months." In the meantime, their parents would "undergo an appropriate education so that the children do not find the same living conditions upon their return."[85] In dealing with Volksdeutsche, however, it soon became apparent that they stood in need of far more than just advice on housekeeping, childrearing, and personal hygiene. Many had intermingled with local Poles and Ukrainians to such an extent that they no longer spoke German, and their seemingly primitive customs roused heady feelings of cultural arrogance among the activists tasked with looking after them. No matter how hard they tried to introduce these people to "German thinking and the German way of life by means of close personal interaction," it was nearly impossible to escape the conclusion that most were politically suspect at best, racially inferior at worst.[86]

NSV agents were already chomping at the bit to widen their educational remit, and so in 1942 they decided to commandeer "ethnically endangered children" – particularly if they had a "50% German blood-share" or the mother had a German maiden name – and began resettling them in Germany. This is what happened to Josef Heldt and Richard Webert. According to the head of the NSV assembly and observation home in Warsaw, Gretel Schmidt, Josef's German mother had been "persecuted and murdered by bandits," and because the boy's father lived "in a purely Polish environment," she reasoned that "an accommodation in a purely German environment is urgently necessary." Both of Richard's parents were still alive, but because his Polish mother was "anti-German" and would not surrender the child to his German father, Schmidt recommended the same "remedy." "A difficult case," she remarked in a dispatch to her colleagues in Darmstadt, "but one that could only be surmounted through evacuation."[87] During her tenure as an NSV social worker in Galicia, Käthe Hahn transported dozens of children "of German stock" to orphanages in Hesse with the explanation that they "spoke Polish" and therefore required Germanization. Although many of these youngsters were orphans, she and her associates on the receiving end knew full well that they still had living relatives capable of serving as guardians.[88] In their effort to force Volksdeutsche into the "ethnic community" and swell the ranks of young people slated for assimilation in the Reich, Nazi officials in the General Government pioneered an additional technique: confiscating the sons and daughters of inhabitants who rejected the award of German citizenship.[89] By 1944, they had also started to conduct wholesale abductions of Polish-speaking children from local orphanages and schools. Six year old Mieczyslaw Domanski, for instance, was among

[85] BA NS 44/37: Linhardt-Röpke to Gaufrauenschaftsleiterinnen, November 22, 1941.

[86] Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 236, 240, 296.

[87] ITS 4.1.2.13/81797321-322: Schmidt to Lutz, October 13, 1944.

[88] ITS 4.1.2.12/81797388-390: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Report on Interview with Käthe Hahn," undated.

[89] Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940-1944* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1994), 263.

a group of eighty pupils seized from Radom in this way and sent to a resettlement camp in Racibórz – the site from which presumptive WED candidates from Upper Silesia were shipped to the Aussenstelle.[90]

Yet if there was one single initiative in occupied Poland that most fully embodied the relationship between national indifference and the kidnapping of foreign-born children, it was the Deutsche Volksliste. In the first place, the Nazis introduced a comprehensive educational platform that encompassed all minors from groups 3 and 4, and the initial feedback provided by German educators suggested highly productive results.[91] "The one positive sign we have," an SS officer observed in July 1942, "is that the Polish children, who from six years and up attend German schools, make a much more inspired impression."[92] Yet his comments indicate that this sense of optimism was dampened by the conviction that their parents still constituted an impediment, or as one of Greiser's ministers asserted, "Previous experience shows that there are a significant percentage of youths who must be removed from their households or from their Polish surroundings."[93] This practice also focused on children who came from ethnically mixed families – without question the trickiest problem confronting the managers of the Volksliste. Exasperated by the absurdly convoluted guidelines emanating from Berlin, which saddled them with the hopeless task of determining whether the "German element" had "predominated" in such cases, Nazi functionaries on the ground began to promote a much more ruthless conception of what lay in the "best interests" of a "half-breed" child. Even Stuckart eventually had to bow to some of their demands; in July 1943, he specified that "non-German foster children, illegitimate children of a non-German spouse, and stepchildren who stem from a non-German parent must be removed from the family unit… Such children are then to be treated like the racially evaluated Polish orphans."[94]

It seems many parents assumed that applying for membership in the DVL would deter the Germans from turning their sons and daughters into wards of the state. If so, they were mistaken.[95] In Upper Silesia, one official denied entry to a certain Herr Kalisch because he and his wife had "actively participated in the insurgency and occupied leading positions in anti-German organizations," yet also ruled that "the racially valuable children must not be allowed to slide back over into *Polentum*; they will therefore be transferred to the Old Reich within the framework of the Re-Germanization Procedure."[96] After her acceptance into Group 3, the mother of young Gerhard Machnik appealed to German personnel

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[90] Hrabar, Tokarz, and Wilczur, *The Fate of Polish Children*, 133-134.

[91] BA R 186/32: RKF Stabshauptamt, "Bericht betr. Schulische Behandlung in der DVL," unsigned, August 27, 1943. Also see Georg Hansen, *Ethnische Schulpolitik im besetzten Polen. Mustergau Wartheland* (Münster: Waxmann, 1995), 54-55.

[92] BA NS 19/1748/5: Reinhard, "Abschrift betr. Eindeutschungsaktion und Polen-Angelegenheiten in Danzig-Westpreussen," July 23, 1942.

[93] Gauamt für Volkstumsfragen, "Richtlinien zur Rückdeutschung von Kindern der DVL Abt. 3 und 4," unsigned, January 1944, in *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. IV: Niemiecka lista narodowa w "Kraju Warty,"* ed. Karol Marian Pospieszalski (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1949), 131.

[94] BA R 70/210/119: Stuckart to Forster, Greiser, and Bracht, July 9, 1943.

[95] Gerda Zorn, *Nach Ostland geht unser Ritt. Deutsche Eroberungspolitik zwischen Germanisierung und Völkermord* (Berlin: Dietz, 1980), 72.

[96] BA NS 2/159/14-15: Scholtz, "Beurteilung der Familie Kalisch," January 31, 1944.

in Racibórz to release her son from captivity. Instead of reuniting Gerhard with his mother, however, they transferred him to an orphanage in Katowice.[97] Agnieszka Klimczak was also enrolled in Group 3, but when the authorities discovered that she preferred to raise her two children as Poles, they took them away. When she later spotted her daughter on the street and brought her back home, the police seized the girl yet again and sentenced Agnieszka to one year in prison. After that, her children vanished without a trace.[98] An eerily similar tragedy befell a woman named Elzbieta in Pomerelia, whose husband gave the following statement in a postwar affidavit:

> Although Protestant, my wife considered herself Polish, and we raised our daughter in the Polish language and Polish spirit. That was the reason why she was picked up by the NSV. She was quartered with the Schubert family in Grudziądz. Two years later, my wife snatched our daughter back and brought her home. However, the gendarmes returned her to the Schuberts and beat her as well as her mother. A short time after that, the Schuberts left for Germany and took my daughter with them.[99]

Those "persons of German descent" who refused to sign up for the Volksliste lived in even more perilous straits. The story of Josef Schwakopf is an edifying testament to the inherent danger of defying this ultimatum and another potent reminder of the crucial role that ethnic Germans played in the abduction campaign. A native of the town of Orłowo in Pomerelia, Josef was present when an SS resettlement squad showed up and expelled thirteen Polish families to make room for incoming Umsiedler. Most of the remaining residents, afraid they might be next, went straight to the nearest DVL branch and made themselves known as Volksdeutsche. Those who did not, the Schwakopfs among them, received a stern warning that they had three months to reconsider. When the SS returned after the termination of this "grace period," Josef's neighbors betrayed his family:

> The German teacher, Frau Schneigardt, came and inquired after our daughter, who was staying with her grandfather in Mielec. My wife Zosia, not suspecting anything, divulged her location… From there our daughter was taken away… Our son Zbigniew was taken away from my wife by force and guile, that is, they tempted him with sweets, and when my wife tried to protect the child, they threatened her. This act was perpetrated in particular by the German Jakob Hessler, a resident of our own village.[100]

Similar incidents took place in the Warthegau and often led to even more tragic consequences. In December 1944, the Gestapo in Łódź informed the Gau Youth Office that "the couple Zajdel and their son Stefan (fourteen) have been sent to a concentration camp because they refused to be registered in the Deutsche Volksliste. The husband and son are in the concentration camp Gross-Rosen, the wife in Ravensbrück. Their release is not to be expected anytime soon." The two younger Zajdel boys, aged twelve and nine, had already been removed from their grandmother's home several months earlier and

[97] Zorn, *Nach Ostland*, 73.
[98] Lukas, *Did the Children Cry?*, 119.
[99] Quoted from Hrabar, Wilczur, and Tokarz, *Kinder im Krieg*, 196.
[100] NARA/NMT M894/5252: Affidavit of Josef Schwakopf, undated.

packed off to an orphanage in Sobótka.[101] By that point, Greiser's minions had arrogated so many "Polonized German children" that the Hitler Youth had to build a special "re-Germanization camp" just to cope with the incoming human traffic (Forster created a similar institution in Toruń, whereas in Upper Silesia these children usually went to the state reformatory in Grodków).[102]

The people with the most to fear by far were those who had the misfortune to be branded as "renegades." In his decree on the "transplantation" of DVL members to Germany in February 1942, Himmler had ordained that "Persons who are especially politically burdensome will not be included in the resettlement action. They will instead be taken into police custody and dispatched to a concentration camp… In all of these cases, the children must be separated from their parents." He also directed the Gestapo to keep a close watch over those families that did make it to the Reich: "If the HSSPFs cannot eliminate detrimental influences vis-à-vis the re-Germanization of children… then they must make arrangements with ideologically and politically dependable families who are prepared to take in these children out of unconditional love, educate them as children of good blood, and treat them as their own."[103] Administrators in the incorporated eastern territories adopted an even harsher stance toward "renegades," one of them insisting, "Under no circumstances should these people be sent to the Old Reich. Those in Group 4 should be sent to the SS and put in a concentration camp. If the children are given to relatives to raise, they will become the most fanatical opponents of the Germans."[104]

We should pause for a moment to dwell on the specific factors that occasioned this state of affairs. After all, why would the Nazis commit such a soul-shattering crime against individuals whom they sought to win over to their side? There had always been a firm conviction that if "bearers of lost German blood" proved incapable of Germanization for "ethnic-political reasons," then at least their offspring must still be salvaged. Wetzel and Hecht foresaw this contingency as early as November 1939, and Greifelt suggested in May 1940 that "It may be of secondary importance what measures are taken against renegades. All that matters is that their children no longer fall prey to the Poles and are instead raised in the midst of a German environment."[105] In fact, Himmler had seemingly made up his mind in September 1940 that "Those who reject re-Germanization must be dealt with through security police measures. The children, who are not responsible for the behavior of their parents, should not have to

[101] NARA/NMT M894/15/4945: Gestapo Litzmannstadt to Jugendamt Litzmannstadt, December 23, 1944; IPN Fond 437/4, Bd. 2: Jugendheim Zobtenweg 12 to Jugendamt Litzmannstadt, August 16, 1944.

[102] Harten, *De-Kulturation*, 303; Hrabar, Wilczur, and Tokarz, *Kinder im Krieg*, 168; ITS 0.1/53756773: ITS Index Card on Irena Janiszewska. This document mentions a "camp for Germanizable Polish children" in Toruń.

[103] USHMMA 15.007M/9/113/150-157: Himmler, "Behandlung der in Abt. 4 der DVL eingtragenen Personen," February 16, 1942.

[104] Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide*, 133.

[105] See Greifelt's prefatory remarks to Anordnung 17/II in *Der Menscheneinsatz: Grundsätze, Anordnungen und Richtlinien* (Berlin: Hauptabteilung des RKFDV, 1940), 52.

suffer for their guilt. The German Reich will step in to handle their education."[106] The question is: why did it take until February 1942 for him to surmount his subsequent wavering and actually follow through with this? The answer lies in the gradual hardening of attitudes toward WED candidates in Germany, for the final decision came around the same time that his underlings began formulating directives for the implementation of the exclusion procedure and the introduction of "enhanced educational measures."

The shift to an overtly repressive platform of forced assimilation within the WED, the order to appropriate children from DVL 4 "renegades," the launch of indiscriminate kidnappings in western Poland – that all of these developments fell within the span of a few weeks was certainly not just happenstance. In February 1942, the Nazis had come to realize that, in the words of one VoMi delegate, "an intellectual and behavioral reformation of the older generations will not occur, or will only bear fruit after a very long time. It is therefore essential that our work succeeds with the younger generations, above all with the children."[107] With respect to WED candidates, Creutz ventured an almost identical opinion: "If the willingness for Germanization is understandably still lacking in many cases, it is nevertheless true that the next generation will be almost completely immersed in Germandom, as befits their racial essence. The supervision and education of the youth must henceforth be regarded as the main task of the Re-Germanization Procedure."[108] The same conclusion prompted Hans Ehlich to recommend "additional methods to distance the children from their elders."[109] This reorientation was not absolute; the race and resettlement experts continued to admit intact families and single adults into the WED. But there was a palpable difference in the trajectory the "hunt for good blood" took after the winter of 1941-1942. The transition to kidnapping minors reflected the now widespread opinion that their youth rendered them far more ideologically pliable than their elders ever could be. Thus, prior dealings with re-Germanizable adults, along with the frustration they bred, served as a pivotal motivating factor behind the abduction of "racially valuable" children throughout East-Central Europe, another product of the nexus between inter-ethnic relations on the home front and the prosecution of *Volkstumspolitik* in the occupied territories.

Nothing demonstrates this connection with more brutal profundity than the crusade to Germanize "bandit children" (*Bandenkinder*) – the sons and daughters of people whom Nazi security forces had executed as partisans – without a doubt the most bizarre embodiment of the paradoxical equivalence the myth of "lost German blood" established between "biological worth" and political opposition. The destruction of Lidice in June 1942 fit squarely within this context, given the flimsy pretense that the town's inhabitants had harbored Heydrich's assassins. But the strategy itself originated in the mountains

[106] BA R 3601/2354/37-39: Himmler, "Erlass für die Überprüfung und Aussonderung der Bevölkerung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten," September 12, 1940.

[107] BA R 69/31/40-48: Seltmann to VoMi-Mitarbeiter in Galicia, January 28, 1942.

[108] BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943.

[109] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/11-21: Ehlich, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Eindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Fremdstämmigen," December 10, 1942.

of northwestern Yugoslavia, where the rapid growth of a communist guerrilla movement supplied Himmler and the Gauleiter with an opportunity to take the "hunt for good blood" to the most ludicrous extremes yet seen. As discussed in Chapter Six, the dramatic increase in acts of sabotage and attacks on ethnic German settlements convinced the Nazis to suspend large-scale ethnic cleansing in Slovenia in late 1941. But that did not mean an end to land clearances and expulsions altogether. On January 24, 1942, Himmler decreed that the relatives of partisans were henceforth to be shot or deported to the Old Reich "on account of active participation in the bandit war or aiding and abetting the bandits."[110] Between January 13 and 15, SS resettlement squads had already assembled eighty-six "relatives of partisans and activists of the Liberation Front" from the village of Dražgoše in the holding camp at Šentvid. Along with another forty individuals captured under similar circumstances, these people underwent a racial examination before being transported to VoMi camps in Germany on March 16.[111] Adult males deemed "inferior" wound up in Dachau or Mauthausen, their female counterparts in Ravensbrück. "The racially valuable," on the other hand, were "accommodated in the Old Reich through the procedure for re-Germanizables."[112] It did not take long for civilians captured in this way to start showing up in the German countryside. SS-District West contained 210 Slovenian WED candidates as of April 27, 1942; by late July, the number had risen to 398, and by January 1943 it stood at 749.[113]

It is important to clarify that most of the Slovenes ensnared by these counterinsurgency sweeps were not actually partisans, but rather civilians who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The definition of "anti-state behavior" employed by German security forces in the field was so vague that it could cover almost anyone residing within "bandit-infested areas." One Wehrmacht infantry general stationed north of the Sava ordered his troops to shoot anyone found with a weapon or considered "guilty of communist activity" and arrest all "suspicious persons" – an incredibly elastic category that for starters comprised "whoever is non-local and cannot prove the necessity of their presence."[114] In short, there was no real concrete distinction made between combatants and non-combatants. According to one VoMi official, incoming re-Germanizables included "forcibly evacuated families whose missing relatives are

[110] BA R 59/57/20-23: Klingsporn to Brückner, February 10, 1943. It appears that no copies of Himmler's directive survived the war, though several other SS officials mentioned it, and the RSHA issued an executive order to this effect on March 24, 1942; see Tone Ferenc, "Quellen zur 'rassischen Untersuchungen von Slowenen unter der deutschen Okkupation," in *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord. NS-Unrecht in Slowenien und seine Spuren in Bayern 1941-1945*, eds. Gerhard Jochem and Georg Seiderer (Berlin: Metropol, 2005), 142-143.

[111] ITS 1.2.7.23.8/82205719-721: Damjanović, "Report on the Umsiedlungslager Šentvid," undated; Steindl to Heimatbund Kreisführer in Lower Styria, February 27, 1942, in *Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Entnationalisierungspolitik in Slowenien 1941-1945*, ed. Tone Ferenc (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1980), Doc. 204.

[112] Hintze to Greifelt, July 31, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 243. Also see Heidi Wilscher, "Die politische Verfolgung der Kärntner Slowenen durch das NS-Regime," in *Pregon koroških Slovencev – Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-2002*, ed. Augustin Malle (Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag, 2002), 210.

[113] LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160: Gutenberger to Oberfinanzpräsident Düsseldorf, April, 27 1942; LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 160: Gutenberger to Oberfinanzpräsident Düsseldorf, January 14, 1943.

[114] Lüters, "Befehl zur Bekämpfung des jugoslawiscen Widerstands im Gebiet nördlich der Sava," July 5, 1943, in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus in Jugoslawien, Griechenland, Albanien, Italien und Ungarn 1941-1945*, ed. Martin Seckendorf (Berlin: Hüthig, 1992), Doc. 145.

presumably still active with the bandits" as well as those "who presumably sympathize with the bandits or have acted in some other way against the state." "All the evacuees from this circle of persons," he concluded, "are more or less suspect."[115] Erwin Rösener, the HSSPF responsible for Lower Styria and Upper Carniola, openly admitted to Hofmann that "In practice, this action is tantamount to an investigation of the entire population, for nearly all of these people have ties to the insurgents."[116] The usage of the term "bandits" was also laden with a broader historical and psychological significance: it placed partisans and their alleged supporters outside the realm of international law by linking them to the "irregulars" (*Freischärler*) German soldiers had encountered during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the First World War, all the while conjuring memories of the genocidal suppression of the Herero-Nama uprising in German Southwest Africa between 1904 and 1907.[117]

In the summer of 1942, Himmler geared this model of security warfare specifically to the Germanization of children. In a directive dated June 25, he declared that the "subjugation of bandit activity in the territories of Upper Carniola and Lower Styria" would occur in the following manner: "All elements of the population who have willingly supported the bandits must be rendered harmless. The men of the guilty families are to be executed as a matter of course, the women are to be arrested and brought to a concentration camp, and the children are to be removed from their homeland and gathered in the Old Reich. I expect special reports on the number and racial worth of these children."[118] Himmler modified these guidelines a month later. Adults whom the RuSHA judged favorably could still enter the WED as before, and some would supplement the ranks of Slovenian Absiedler awaiting resettlement in Lublin.[119] But the Reichsführer-SS was now interested primarily in the offspring of such people; even if the SS spared their lives and labeled them "capable of re-Germanization," they could still lose their children to the clutches of the Nazi regime.[120] Rösener was the perfect man to lead this kind of undertaking, code-named Operation Enzian for the violet gentian flower that thrived in the mountainous terrain of Slovenia. He had previously served as HSSPF in Lorraine, a hotbed of antagonism toward "ethnic traitors," and after his transfer in December 1941 to the same position in SS-District Alpenland, which also encompassed southeastern Austria, he became intimately familiar with the "reticence" of Polish WED candidates who lived within his jurisdiction.[121] The RuS-Führer attached to his office, Heinrich

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[115] BA R 59/57/20-23: Klingsporn to Brückner, February 10, 1943.

[116] BA NS 2/81/48-50: Rösener to Hofmann, August 8, 1942.

[117] Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 117-118, 211; Philip W. Blood, *Hitler's Bandit Hunters: The SS and the Nazi Occupation of Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2006), 76, 301.

[118] BA NS 19/28/10-11: Himmler, "Richtlinien für die Durchführung der Aktion gegen Partisanen und sonstigen Banditen in Oberkrain und Untersteiermark," June 25, 1942.

[119] Hintze to Greifelt, July 31, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 243; BA R 49/851: Stier to Brandt, November 16, 1942; BA R 49/968: Himmler to Greifelt, July 11, 1942.

[120] BA R 59/487/35: Obersteiner to Brückner, September 14, 1942.

[121] BA NS 2/81/48-50: Rösener to Hofmann, August 8, 1942.

Obersteiner, shared the assumption that allowing "partisan children" to remain with family members would "greatly endanger [their] Germanization," and he justified separating them with the circular logic that otherwise "these children would obviously learn the precise details about the death of their fathers and would thus be raised in a spirit of hatred toward Germandom."[122] The security rationale behind these techniques is unmistakable, though rather than killing children to prevent future retaliation for the murder of their parents (as was the case with Jews), here the idea was to assimilate them. Himmler's stated motivation was equally "practical" and fantastical by turns. The purpose behind the "recovery" of "orphaned youths," he explained, was not just to divest foreign nations of a future "Germanic ruling class," but to create a "type of Janissaries" (*eine Art Janitscharen*) – the elite Ottoman bodyguard corps made up of enslaved and forcibly converted Christian boys from the Balkans – who would one day return to their lands of origin as the standard-bearers of an imperial aristocracy.[123]

Operation Enzian got underway in Upper Carniola in late July 1942, and from the very beginning the "bandit hunters" carried out their "retaliatory measures" with the utmost ferocity. The commander of a police battalion in Bled incited his men with the following command: "The male population over the age of fifteen is to be shot on the spot, their corpses tossed in the fire. The villages are to be burned to the ground. The remaining population is to be expelled and brought to the resettlement camp in St. Veit [Šentvid]."[124] Eyewitness testimony confirms that the raids took place in almost exactly this fashion. Young Antonija Zadnikar, a native of Pstotnik, remembered that "the Gestapo forced us from our house and gave us ten minutes to prepare for the trip. In front of the inn they separated my father from us and led him to a special area, where the other men from the village were already standing. We were packed into trucks and driven to the abbey in Šentvid. In the days that followed, as we waited there for a transport, we learned that the men had all been shot. We were now fatherless." That same day, July 20, 1942, German security units fell upon the nearby hamlet of Kokra, as recalled by Jože Rezman, a mere boy at the time: "My father and older brother Štefan were immediately taken away; they then herded us children to the assembly point along with our stepmother… Soon we sat together in a lorry with several other villagers… we looked back in the direction of our village with teary eyes and saw thick smoke rising toward the sky. It quickly became clear that our houses were no more, and that only smoke remained of our fathers and grandfathers."[125] Nearly all of the "evacuees" from Upper Carniola underwent racial selection in Šentvid, where the Eignungsprüfer Georg Rödel set up shop and began performing examinations on July 25.[126] Although most of the children who passed through the camp were still accompanied by their mothers, Rödel soon discovered that police detachments had slaughtered

[122] Obersteiner to Reindl, October 5, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 266.
[123] BA NS 19/1514/3-4: Himmler to Phleps, May 20, 1944; BA NS 19/1514/7: Himmler to Berger, July 14, 1944.
[124] Brenner, "Sonderbefehl Nr. 1," July 19, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 238.
[125] See the testimonies of Zadnikar and Rezman in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 309-311.
[126] BA NS 2/81/48-50: Rösener to Hofmann, August 8, 1942.

women as well as men when around fifty orphans turned up whom he later identified as "surviving family members of Yugoslavian bandits." He classified about half of them with the grades RuS-I and RuS-II.[127]

The war against the partisans was no less savage in Lower Styria, though here the acquisition of "bandit children" transpired somewhat differently. During a single action conducted in early August 1942, German security forces rounded up some two thousand people from communities in the lower Savinja valley and interned them at a holding facility in Celje. On August 9, they separated the children from their parents, putting the infants in wicker baskets (like the Turks of old), and shipped them to a resettlement camp in Frohnleiten, Austria the next morning.[128] There a team of sisters from the German Red Cross took over responsibility for the care of the incoming youths (around 430 of them), whose arrival one nurse described as follows: "The children were hungry, weak, dirty, and half-naked, and some had soiled themselves… they were screaming and crying, and our attendants had to do their best to look after this train of misery."[129] All of the surviving adults aged eighteen and over were then deported from Celje directly to Auschwitz, where they perished in the gas chambers.[130] The same pattern repeated itself elsewhere in Lower Styria over the course of subsequent weeks, and in mid-August a second transport of children rolled into Frohnleiten.[131] Such atrocities, of course, yielded the exact opposite of what Himmler intended; instead of crushing the rebellion, they contributed to its growth, fueling a cycle of violence that went on and on.[132] Between March 1942 and August 1943, the Germans expelled some eight thousand "relatives of executed partisans and hostages" from Upper Carniola and Lower Styria, about half of whom were inducted into the WED.[133] We can only confirm that 860 Slovenian minors were removed from their families (as of January 1943), though the overall number was probably much higher.[134]

Meanwhile, Himmler had awarded Lebensborn the task of overseeing the subsequent welfare of these "partisan children."[135] On August 12, 1942, Viermetz and Obersteiner met with delegates from the VoMi in Bled to organize the relocation of orphans from Upper Carniola to intake centers in Austria (they visited Šentvid a short time later to confer with Rödel).[136] Nazi resettlement functionaries dispersed

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[127] Koop, *Dem Führer*, 151.

[128] ITS 4.1.2.4/81795234-247: Testimony of Ernst Hitzfeld, October 27, 1947.

[129] Rath, "Bericht über den Kindertransport nach Frohnleiten," August 10, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 251.

[130] Eberharth to Braumüller, November 16, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 277.

[131] Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop," 253.

[132] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157414-415: Generalstaatsanwalt Graz to Thierack, sig. illegible, May 28, 1943. There were four further actions (on October 7 and November 7, 1942, then on March 13 and July 9, 1943) during which the SS resettled relatives of "bandits" to Germany; see Ferenc, "Quellen zur rassischen Untersuchungen," 142-143.

[133] Tone Ferenc, "'Absiedler': Slowenen zwischen 'Eindeutschung' und Arbeitseinsatz," in *Europa und der "Reichseinsatz". Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938-1945*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (Essen: Klartext, 1991), 202. Also see the fourth footnote for Document 76 in Ferenc, *Quellen*.

[134] BA R 50/57/12: Hornung to Brückner, January 14, 1943; BA R 59/57/20-23: Klingsporn to Brückner, February 10, 1943.

[135] Creutz to Reindl, September 5, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 253; ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342366: Tesch to Schreiber, August 4, 1943.

[136] BA R 59/487/35: Obersteiner to Brückner, September 14, 1942. See Viermetz's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1064-1068.

abductees from Lower Styria, on the other hand, in at least six VoMi youth camps spread across Bavaria (adolescents and teenagers from Upper Carniola would later join them).[137] The officials who ran these facilities were well aware of how their new charges had gotten there. Inventories explicitly referred to them as the sons and daughters of "violent communist criminals" or "persons who have been justicized (*Justifizierten*)" and contained entries such as "Waldemar Krembusch, 1939, parents shot" and "Emilie Keglitsch, 1936, father arrested, mother shot."[138] At any rate, many of the inmates did not stay at these sites for very long; according to an arrangement worked out in early 1943, Lebensborn assumed custody over "unaccompanied" children up to the age of ten, whereas the VoMi gradually handed over the older ones to boarding schools in the interior of Germany or released them to private households in the area.[139] Antonija and Ivanka Zadnikar worked as domestic servants, one for the family of a Gestapo agent in Nuremberg, the other for a dentist in Erlangen.[140] To retrieve those "orphans" reserved for Lebensborn, Viermetz and her assistants combed the VoMi camps and picked out youngsters who caught their fancy, usually toddlers and infants, then brought them to a secluded compound outside Kohren-Sahlis. From there, the agency doled out around fifty of these children to German foster parents.[141]

What began as a localized affair confined to Slovenia soon grew into a conspiracy to steal the progeny of resistance fighters and dissidents from all over Europe. In Bohemia-Moravia, much like in Poland, the Nazis also sent "ethnically mixed" children to German-run orphanages if their parents did not guarantee a "German upbringing" or if the Czech partner declined German citizenship.[142] As in Slovenia, however, here too the abduction campaign centered on the offspring of people who had been imprisoned or executed on account of alleged political transgressions. On June 24, 1942, SS operatives meted out the same fate to the small hamlet of Ležáky that they had visited upon Lidice only two weeks prior. After policemen shot the male inhabitants and arrested the women as suspected "enemy sympathizers," the Eignungsprüfer on the scene selected six of the surviving youngsters, who were sent to Łódź along with twelve "unwanted children." The UWZ handed the former over to the "assimilation home" in Pastuchów and condemned the latter to death by asphyxiation in Chełmno.[143] A year later, Himmler regularized the

[137] BA R 59/112/65-74: "Liste der VoMi Jugendlager im Gau Bayreuth – Angehörige von in der Untersteiermark erschossenen Banditen," September 21, 1943.

[138] ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82343133: Panzer to VoMi Lager Himmelberg, February 25, 1943; ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82343114: "Aufstellung über die im Lager Marianum-Bamberg angekommenen und untergebrachten Angehörigen von Justifizierten und flüchtigen Banditen aus der Untersteiermark," April 27, 1943.

[139] BA R 59/57/20-23: Klingsporn to Brückner, February 10, 1943. Also see Koop, *Dem Führer*, 154.

[140] See Zadnikar's testimony in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 309.

[141] LOC/NMT, 684-685; ITS 4.1.2.6/81796099: ITS Child Search Branch, "List of Yugoslav Children in the Home Sonnenweise," undated; ITS 4.1.2.11/81796784: ITS Child Search Branch, "List of Yugoslav Children in Gau Salzburg," undated. Also see Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 217-219.

[142] Ibid., 166. Michal Šimůnek, "Race, Heredity, and Nationality: Children in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1945," in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, eds. Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen (New York: Berg, 2005), 197. Also see Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 166; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 195.

[143] Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop," 251-252.

seizure of "Czech children whose parents were executed as members of the resistance movement" and asked the Lebensborn Society to take in those classified as "racially superior," since they would "obviously become the most dangerous avengers of their parents if they are not raised in a humane and proper manner."[144] HSSPF Frank estimated that there were around one hundred eligible prospects already housed in internment camps outside Prague, and he later instructed underlings in that city as well as in Brno to register all local youths whose parents had been sentenced to death or perished in the KZ.[145]

The search for "Janissaries" also spread into Western Europe – a consequence of Hitler's decision to vest Himmler with the power to coordinate anti-partisan warfare throughout the width and breadth of the continent – once again revealing the cross-pollination of "child-stealing" practices from one part of Europe to another.[146] In July 1942, the HSSPF in France, Carl Albrecht Oberg, responded to an uptick in attacks on military installations by declaring that the family members of "assassins, saboteurs, and troublemakers" would also be held accountable for these acts of subversion and punished "with the most severe methods." He ordered the Gestapo to execute all the male relatives of a given suspect, reduce the women to slave laborers, and turn over their children to German educational institutions.[147] When German troops marched into the previously unoccupied zone of southern France in November 1942, the race examiners followed closely behind, eager to realize Himmler's dream of raking the French heartland for young carriers of "Nordic blood."[148] They may have taken part in reprisal actions waged in the area around Marseilles that same fall by screening "leftover children" (*übrig gebliebene Kinder*). They were definitely present in the vicinity of Toulouse in April 1944, deployed there in the wake of "mopping-up operations" to evaluate several hundred orphans as potential candidates for Germanization.[149] Although pertinent evidence is extremely sparse, such a close degree of cooperation with SS security forces makes it likely that the RuSHA carried out other similar endeavors in Vichy France, for by the time the Wehrmacht abandoned the region later that year, the Germans had murdered no less than fourteen thousand people in the course of their merciless war against the paramilitary *Maquis*.[150]

To be sure though, the focal point of the Nazis' obsession with "bandit children" lay in Eastern Europe, and in this regard as well, occupied Poland became a major stalking ground. During a stopover in Kraków in October 1942, Himmler called for the establishment of a special complex to quarter "racially

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[144] BA NS 48/30: Himmler to Sollmann, June 21, 1943.

[145] BA NS 19/375/15: Sollmann to Himmler, July 7, 1943; ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342375-376: Wuchs to Brandt, June 13, 1944.

[146] NARA T-175/140/2663246: Hitler, "Richtlinien für die Verstärkte Bekämpfung des Bandenunwesens im Osten," August 1942. Also see Blood, *Hitler's Bandit Hunters*, 77, 81.

[147] Oberg, "Bekanntmachung über die Einführung der Sippenhaft," July 10, 1942 in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich 1940-1944*, ed. Ludwig Nestler (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990), Doc. 123.

[148] BA R 69/642/39: Gnadeberg to Hofmann, November, 16, 1942.

[149] BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Klinger, April 21, 1944.

[150] Peter Lieb, *Konventioneller Krieg oder NS-Weltanschauungskrieg? Kriegführung und Partisanenbekämpfung in Frankreich 1943/44* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 339-350.

valuable" Polish youngsters taken in the course of resettlement operations in the province of Zamość. Despite the objections of leading SS police and security officials, who worried that such kidnappings would increase partisan activity, the site Himmler envisioned was eventually set up – not in the General Government, but at the old UWZ transfer station in Łódź-Konstantynów.[151] By the end of the war, 4,453 children from Zamość had passed through here on their way to orphanages and foster homes in the Reich; most of their parents had either been killed during German counterinsurgency sweeps or murdered shortly afterwards in the gas chambers of Majdanek.[152] There was an additional compound in Łódź that functioned in a similar capacity: the so-called Jugendschutzlager, or juvenile custody camp, which housed minors from all over Poland, particularly those whose elders were members of the Polish underground or had refused to sign up for the DVL. Although created specifically to dispose of "delinquents" through intentional starvation and grievous maltreatment (torture was commonplace), SS leaders arranged for the Jugendschutzlager to serve as a catchment for *Bandenkinder* as well. When one RSHA official notified subordinates of its existence in late November 1942, his communiqué mentioned that the commandant would "arrange for the assessment of these Polish children as to their capacity for Germanization in consultation with the Aussenstelle of the Race and Settlement Main Office." On at least one occasion, Hofmann himself visited the camp to supervise a "rough selection" then in progress.[153] Inmates whom the examiners declared "suitable" were then transferred to Germany. In March 1943, for instance, the young daughters of resistance leader Dr. Franciszek Witaszek – whom the Gestapo had beheaded a few months prior – traveled from the Jugendschutzlager to separate households in Mecklenburg and Austria by way of the Gaukinderheim in Kalisz and the Lebensborn maternity home in Bad Polzin.[154] Some prisoners of the extermination center at Auschwitz-Birkenau likewise escaped almost certain death due to their "racial phenotype." In May 1943, camp personnel led by Dr. Josef Mengele (a former RuSHA employee) collected hundreds of blond-haired, blue-eyed children for "re-education" and consignment to German families in the Reich.[155]

Ironically, the farther eastward German armies marched, the greater the appetite for "bandit children" became. And so it was that this outlandish enterprise reached its apogee in the Soviet Union – the scene of the Nazis' most massive and ruthless efforts to quell popular insurrection. On January 6,

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[151] Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa, 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut Verlag, 1998), 247-248.

[152] Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung*, 137; Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop," 254.

[153] ITS 1.1.22.0.3/82115631-633: Schefe to Staatspolizei(leit)stellen and SD Abschnitten in Poland, November 28, 1942; ITS 1.1.22.0.3/82115665: Brandt to Pohl and Kaltenbrunner, March 6, 1943; Józef Witkowski, *Hitlerowski Obóz Koncentracyjny dla małoletnich w Łodzi* (Wrocław: Ossilineum, 1975), 173-175. Also see Harten, *De-Kulturation*, 297. Hofmann was photographed leaving the Jugendschutzlager in 1943; see USHMMA Photo Archives, #02378 (courtesy of Instytut Pamięci Narodowej). This facility was also sometimes referred to as the Jugendverwehrlager, or juvenile custodial camp.

[154] Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1944* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1987), 473.

[155] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 44; Lukas, *Did the Children Cry?*, 115. Hofmann and Scholtz also visited Auschwitz on at least one occasion; see BA NS 2/81/146-147: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über eine Besprechung in Auschwitz," June 30, 1942.

1943, Himmler ordered his "special plenipotentiary for the combatting of partisans," Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, to clear the entire civilian population from huge swathes of "bandit-infested" territory in Belarus and northern Ukraine. While condemning men and women suspected of assisting the guerrillas to slave labor in Auschwitz (that is, if they survived the mass shootings that almost invariably accompanied these missions), he also foresaw the creation of an assembly point in Lublin where children could be gathered for the purpose of a "racial and political evaluation."[156] This "bandit youth camp" was never built due to a shortage of raw materials; instead, German security forces dispatched their young captives to the Jugendschutzlager in Łódź.[157] When overcrowding took that option off the table, they sought out new depositories, such as the concentration camp in Trawniki and the resettlement camp in Potulice (a pipeline to the Aussenstelle for prospective re-Germanizables from Danzig-West Prussia).[158] Most "partisan children" who hailed from the conquered lands of the Soviet Union, however, eventually ended up at the UWZ compound in Łódź -Konstantynów.[159] Among them were 3,753 "orphans" from the Baltics delivered up by rearguard troops attached to Army Group North in the spring of 1943. The SS-led "pacification" campaign known as Operation Winter Magic netted an additional thousand between January and July of that year.[160] As in Slovenia and elsewhere, the overwhelming majority of the families torn apart in the course of anti-partisan raids did not actually pose any real threat to German rule. One police commander in the field conceded that many of his victims were "relatives of innocent Russians and therefore not actually bandit children," though he rejected the idea of giving them to local orphanages because that would constitute "a permanent enrichment of the Russian ethnic group."[161] All told, by the time the Third Reich collapsed in the spring of 1945, the Nazis had abducted approximately fifty thousand foreign children for the purpose of Germanization.[162]

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[156] NARA T-175/81/2601730: Himmler to Bach-Zelewski, Daluege, Kaltenbrunner, Brandt, Pohl, and HSSPFs in the Soviet Union, January 6, 1943; NARA T-175/81/2601608: Himmler to Bach-Zelewski, undated.

[157] ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342259-260: Glücks to Brandt, April 1, 1943.

[158] ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342264-265: RSHA IV D 5 to Rohde, sig. illegible," July 10, 1943; Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 349.

[159] ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342273: Kaltenbrunner to Suchanek, September 22, 1943.

[160] Ibid.; ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342262: Oberquartiermeister Heeresgruppe Nord to Himmler, April 18, 1943.

[161] ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342269-270: Werth to Suchanek, July 19, 1943. The Germans often referred to all of the various ethnic groups of the western Soviet borderlands as "Russians."

[162] The precise number of foreign-born child abductees is a matter of considerable controversy. Official Polish statistics compiled by Roman Hrabar and his associates suggest a total of 200,000 children kidnapped for the purposes of Germanization from Poland alone, though that figure can be considered a gross exaggeration, for it is completely unsustainable in light of the available evidence. Georg Lilienthal claimed that the Lebensborn Society only handled some 350 Polish, Czech, and Slovenian "orphans," but that number is clearly far too low; see Lilienthal, *Der Lebensborn*, 228. Isabel Heinemann's estimate of 50,000 seems to be the most accurate and reasonable (20,000 from Poland, 20,000 from the Soviet Union, and around 10,000 from Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Western Europe); see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 508-509fn. Contemporary German sources indicate that no less than 9,800 children were removed from the Baltics, along with roughly the same number from Ukraine and Belarus, though it is unclear how many the RuSHA deemed "racially valuable"; see BA NS 19/2216/1-2: Greifelt to Himmler, May 13, 1942; ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342262: Oberquartiermeister Heeresgruppe Nord to Himmler, April 18, 1943. We can also reckon with confidence that the SS seized several thousand children each from Norway, Slovenia, and Bohemia, though it is unknown how many children came from France and the Low Countries. About 1,600 children were kidnapped in Danzig-West Prussia and a further 3,000 in Upper Silesia, along with at least 4,500 from the General Government, which means that around 10,000 came from the Warthegau. In May 1947, the United Nations Relief and

What happened to these "racially valuable foreign youths" after their arrival in Germany? At first the Nazis distributed them among at least sixty different children's homes and boarding schools, the bulk of them managed by the NSV.[163] As we saw in the case of the Slovenes, some wound up in the resettlement camps of the VoMi (the Umsiedlungslager Parsch near Salzburg housed around sixty "Germanizable" children from Poland too).[164] Adolescents and teenagers were also sometimes enrolled in the so-called German Home Schools (*Deutsche Heimschulen*), special dormitories initially founded in 1941 for the children of deceased Wehrmacht soldiers and Nazi officials stationed abroad. Although technically subordinate to the Reich Ministry of Education, the man in charge of the Heimschulen, August Heissmeyer, was also a high-ranking SS officer and RKF delegate (as the HSSPF for Berlin-Brandenburg), and thus stood in a unique position to harness the resources of the state bureaucracy to Himmler's demographic aims.[165] The daily routine in these facilities revolved around almost ceaseless ideological indoctrination, particularly for foreign-born pupils. In addition to German language instruction and athletic conditioning, they also had to attend nightly "political assemblies" organized by Hitler Youth leaders, who compelled them to sing German hymns and learn about the great deeds and accomplishments of National Socialism by watching propaganda films. Pedantic discipline was another characteristic feature of the curriculum, which one girl described as a "truly Prussian regime." In accordance with Himmler's desire to form a corps of "Janissaries," headmasters subjected their young male charges to a rigorous program of paramilitary training, complete with uniforms, maneuver drills, and marksmanship courses. In the words of Heinrich Hauser, director of the Heimschule Niederalteich in Bavaria, these activities would ensure that "children from the Warthegau become members of the nation in the exact same way as German children."[166]

Most of the children the SS purloined from abroad, however, ended up in the institutions of the Lebensborn Society – jarringly surreal places even to those familiar with Nazi Germanization policy. Roman Sobkowiak remembered a chance visit to a Lebensborn center near Stuttgart in 1943 as follows: "Things were going on inside the villa that seemed mysterious to me. This had to do with the strikingly large number of young blond women staying there. The girls were totally distraught and looked at the

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Rehabilitation Administration cited a figure of 3,732 Polish children who had been taken from their homes, and that was just in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and Hesse. By June 1950, the Red Cross had identified a total of 4,927 "Germanizable" children for repatriation to Poland, though they concluded that an additional 6,000 from Eastern Europe and 7,000 from Western Europe remained undiscovered; see Hrabar, Wilczur, and Tokarz, *Kinder im Krieg*, 241-242, 333-335. Because Lebensborn records are incomplete and the NSV destroyed virtually all of its relevant documentation, the final tally will probably never be known.

[163] ITS 4.1.2.7/81795773-774: UNRRA Child Search Division, "List of Lebensborn Homes and Institutions Involved in the Program," undated; ITS 6.1.2.16/82491408-432: ITS Child Search Branch, "An Outline of the Structure and Practices of Lebensborn for Guidance in Child Search," unsigned, undated.

[164] Roman Hrabar, *Hitlerowski rabunek dzieci polskich Uprowadzanie I germanizowanie dzieci polskich w latach 1939-1945* (Katowice: Śląsk, 1960), 59.

[165] BA R 186/35: Greifelt, "Anordnung 67/I," February 19, 1942. On the Deutsche Heimschulen in general, see Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2010), 16.

[166] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 119, 126-129.

floor bashfully. I instantly recognized that they were foreigners. They were all stunningly beautiful."[167] At these sites as well, the assimilatory protocol followed a gendered division of labor; while the girls performed household chores and engaged in "practical trades" like toy-making and woodcarving, the boys received a "martial upbringing."[168] "From reveille to taps," recalled Wieslaw Kuligowski of his time at Heim Alpenland in Oberweis, "we underwent training: calisthenics, hand-to-hand combat, and lessons on how to use a bayonet. We needed this, we were told, in order to be able to fight against Polish bandits."[169] Yet despite the stern demeanor of their supervisors, many inmates did everything they could to resist de-nationalization, usually by singing Polish songs and refusing to speak in German. The repercussions for this kind of behavior were swift and brutal; beatings and other forms of cruel and unusual punishment became a regular occurrence, as did escape attempts. In a few cases, Nazi personnel even elected to deport "troublesome" children back to their lands of origin. The head official at the Heimschule Achern, Klara Keit, sent four girls to Łódź after even the strongest intimidation could not persuade them to renounce their Polish background. Although Keit never doubted the "biological value" of these girls, she still washed her hands of them, "I cannot do anything with a child who does not want to live with a German family." Upon returning to the Warthegau, the girls were interned in the Jugendschutzlager.[170]

That the Nazis would renounce "bearers of lost German blood" (albeit on a limited basis) was nothing new, but the abuse many of these children suffered indicates that the central paradox of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* continued to bedevil its architects and practitioners regardless of the age group. On the one hand, there existed a prevalent belief by mid-1942 that initiates had to be mentally broken through severe "corrective measures" before they would acquiesce to becoming "ethnic comrades" – a contention that applied just as much to minors as it did to grown-ups. On the other hand, there was a countervailing tendency to assert that "racially valuable foreigners" should enjoy the same rights as German citizens, and that mistreatment only served to push them into the arms of the enemy. Both sides of the argument seemed to have merit. Although it would be foolish to give too much credence to the exculpatory postwar statements of Lebensborn employees, nearly all of whom claimed that they had always acted kindly toward their foreign-born wards, many children confirmed that such depictions were not entirely bogus, or at least gave conflicting testimony regarding their experiences. So, for instance, while one witness stated that the guards at Heim Alpenland often locked unruly subjects in an underground cellar, another maintained that the building did not even have a cellar.[171] More than a few subjects avowed that they had no unpleasant memories of their stay in Oberweis, and that they neither

[167] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 61-62.
[168] ITS 4.1.2.7/81795861: Affidavit of Anneliese Jansky.
[169] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 186.
[170] Ibid., 123-124.
[171] See the testimony of Lucie Bergner in LOC/NMT, 1021-1027.

endured nor observed any kind of corporal punishment.[172] The behavioral reports composed by Maria Knipp-Merkel, the director of Heim Alpenland, reveal that she was hardly dissatisfied with the "progress" of the young persons living under her care. In evaluating the conduct of Tadeusz Bochat, or "Walter Bochert," she wrote, "Walter has settled in well and does not cause any problems. He is always happy and cheerful during playtime with his comrades… I consider Walter Bochert suitable for a rural foster home and do not see any reason why he would make trouble."[173] Evaluations like this explain why Himmler, after reading an overview on the "Germanization of eastern children" in March 1943, announced to Viermetz that he was "very pleased with the positive results."[174]

The mixed picture we are left with reflects a wider truth that pertained to re-Germanizable adults as well, especially in the VoMi camps: those who did what they were told and abided by the rules set down by their German overlords could usually expect a fair shake, whereas those who diverged from this path even slightly either faced unrelenting pressure to conform or found themselves disbarred from the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Under such circumstances, it is perfectly understandable that adapting to one's newfound circumstances seemed like the most sensible course of action. The National Socialists were quite right in presuming that children would be more receptive to their message than grown-ups. Yet it is equally true that Germanization could never fully reconcile many of the older youths to the idea of abandoning their past; instead, it triggered a sense of existential angst, an identity crisis that persisted no matter how much one tried to dissemble. Young Henryk Wojciechowski encapsulated this condition eloquently in his recollections of wartime life in the Third Reich: "The awareness of events and memories was concealed, so that each child had to retreat into his or her own private world under the cover of outward candor and surrender to an uncertain fate… I was party to my own alienation. I accepted my situation without the feeling of injustice, yet still harbored nostalgia for Polishness, my chosen faith. 'Who are you?' which I had known since childhood, was displaced by the question 'What next?'"[175]

Regardless of how these children felt about what was happening to them, in most cases Nazi officials decided that they were ready to join German families after a "re-education" period of about one year, though some became available "by request" as early as April 1942.[176] To be clear, abductees from foreign lands were almost never formally adopted during the war, since that would have prompted all sorts of tricky juridical issues, but rather entrusted to individual citizens willing to take on the mantle of foster care in anticipation of a future legitimization.[177] The avenues for cementing this arrangement, however, were almost as varied as the methods used to kidnap non-German children in the first place.

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[172] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 182-183.
[173] Ibid., 173-174.
[174] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447475: Brandt to Viermetz, March 15, 1943.
[175] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 158-159.
[176] Heinemann, "Until the Last Drop," 249.
[177] ITS 4.1.2.5/81795465-470: Interrogation of Inge Viermetz, undated.

Generally speaking, the Nazi Party ran its own clearing house, or Reichadoptionsstelle, for the huge number of foreign-born "orphans" who fell into the hands of the NSV, while the state youth offices tended to work more closely with the SS.[178] When one couple in Edelsberg inquired about the possibility of obtaining a foster child in January 1944, the local Youth Office passed on their request to Dr. Günther Tesch at Lebensborn headquarters in Munich, who replied shortly thereafter that he would "gladly" help them. "If you know of any other couples who are interested in a child from the recovered East," his secretary added, "I ask that you put them in touch with me."[179] Yet even this jurisdictional divide was never all that clear-cut in practice. Provincial agents of the Reichadoptionsstelle could scarcely have functioned without the youth offices, and Lebensborn officials often utilized the services of the NSV to find homes for the "ethnically alien" youngsters under their control, as did their colleagues in the VoMi.[180] The RuSHA got involved too; in southern Austria, Theodor Obersteiner succeeded in unloading the children held in Parsch to residents of seventeen different towns because he shrewdly availed himself of all the various agencies mentioned above.[181] In some cases, "racially valuable youths" were simply given to whoever would take them, especially during the later years of the war. One NSV nurse returned to her hometown in the Sudetenland in July 1944 with five Polish boys whom she had "rescued" from the children's home in Łagiewniki. Thanks to the efforts of Nazi youth leaders, who publicized the boys' arrival in the local press, families from nearby promptly volunteered to shelter them.[182] The fostering process, in other words, was at once both intricately bureaucratic as well as incredibly diffuse and ad-hoc.

Still, it almost always entailed some form of preliminary vetting of the families in question. With respect to Lebensborn, applicants usually had to authenticate their "Aryan racial pedigree" as well as demonstrate to the youth offices that their "lifestyle" and "political reliability" stood beyond reproach by passing a criminal background check.[183] They also had to certify that they possessed the financial means, physical health, and emotional sensitivity required to care for a child. There were ways to get around these prerequisites, especially for prospective custodians whom Nazi functionaries knew personally. Fritz Bartels occasionally allocated Polish children to members of his staff and other employees of the Warthegau administration, some of them native Volksdeutsche.[184] In Germany itself, citizens with SS contacts also pulled strings to get around the usual red tape. One couple in Hamburg appealed directly to

[178] ITS 4.1.2.12/81797131-135: ITS Child Search Branch, "Report on the NSV," unsigned, undated; ITS 4.1.2.14/81797531: Meyer to Chief Child Search Officer Mellingen, May 9, 1949.

[179] ITS 4.1.2.1/81794681: Tesch to Kreisjugendamt Weilburg, January 11, 1944; ITS 6.1.2.16/82491389: Schneider to Kreisjugendamt Weilburg, January 22, 1944

[180] BA NS 48/29: Reichsadoptionsstelle, "Rundbrief 1/41," unsigned, January 1941; ITS 4.1.2.13/81797299: Gau-Adoptionsstelle Darmstadt to Stadtjugendamt Heidelberg, September 2, 1944; LOC/NMT, 108 [vol. V]. Also see Koop, *Dem Führer*, 108.

[181] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 140-141, 144-145.

[182] ITS 4.1.2.13/81797336: Harvey to ITS Branch Esslingen, November 13, 1948.

[183] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 142.

[184] See Bartels' testimony in LOC/NMT, 1046-1049.

Himmler in February 1943 after being told that they would otherwise have to wait up to five years to obtain an adoptee. The Reichsführer-SS was eager to oblige them; within a month, Lebensborn personnel had selected a young Slovenian boy from the Umsiedlungslager Werdenfels and transferred him to Heim Sonnenwiese in Kohren-Sahlis, where his new parents fetched him a short while later.[185] Although childless SS officers technically enjoyed precedence, Party officials similarly exploited their position to move to the front of the line. The NSV Ortsgruppenleiter in Östrich opted to go through Lebensborn instead of his own organization upon hearing that they had "only very healthy children"; he subsequently procured a young Polish girl from Heim Alpenland.[186] Nevertheless, most of the people who took in "racially valuable foreign youths" were ordinary people who just happened to find out in one way or another that Lebensborn had foster children on hand. Membership in the Nazi Party was not mandatory, and even a record of run-ins with the law did not necessarily disqualify someone. In fact, only between 10 to 15 percent of the foreign-born children processed by Lebensborn actually went to SS families.[187] On the contrary, the evidence reveals that people whom the Nazis chose to act as stewards came from all walks of life. Wilhelm Rossmann, a schoolteacher in Lippe, requested a young girl from Lebensborn in July 1942 and received a prompt response from Viermetz's assistant, Emilie Edelmann:

> I can see from your letter that you have already been waiting on a child for a long time… I have the greatest sympathy for your predicament… I have just this day heard from the SS Race and Settlement Office that the groundwork for the transfer of children to Lebensborn has been concluded, so we can expect the arrival of the first children at our home in Pomerania in short order. If there is a young girl among these children who accords with your wishes in regard to age and appearance, I would obviously be happy to deliver her to you.[188]

This was no false promise either. Viermetz later confessed that she and Edelmann personally placed at least thirty non-German "orphans" with households in the Reich, though most of the time couples were invited to come to a Lebensborn home and pick one out for themselves.[189] Maria Treiber remembered this experience as a fond first encounter with her new daughter: "Frau Merkel brought me three girls and let me spend some time alone with them. I knew right away which one would suit me."[190] To most of the children it seemed like something more akin to a slave auction. "We had to stand in a row," Irene Majewska remembered, "The foster parents were told they could simply choose who they wanted."[191] Potential "buyers" made it difficult to escape this sense of objectification. One Nazi Party member from Bavaria, Otto Uebe, proved to be quite selective indeed: "I was summoned to the children's

[185] BA NS 19/1267/25: Hermann H. to Himmler, March 14, 1943.
[186] ITS 4.1.2.7/81795946-952: ITS Child Search Branch, "Report on Lebensborn-Heim Oberweis," undated.
[187] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 142, 107.
[188] ITS 4.1.2.8/81796170: Edelmann to Rossmann, September 24, 1942.
[189] ITS 4.1.2.5/81795465-470: Interrogation of Inge Viermetz, undated; ITS 4.1.2.1/81794681: Tesch to Kreisjugendamt Weilburg, May 11, 1944.
[190] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 197-198.
[191] Ibid., 140.

home in Kohren-Sahlis, where I was shown approximately five or six boys and two girls. I picked out one of the girls because I had been told that the other one probably still had a mother. I didn't like her anyhow… As for the boys, well, I guess I liked some of them, but I didn't pay them much attention, so they were sent away."[192] Another trustee in Hamburg was even more fastidious, especially with respect to physiognomy: "We were slightly disappointed with the boy chosen for us, Hans-Dieter; with his distinctively round skull, he did not fit in with our family, in which narrow faces predominate… We then came upon little Wilhelm, who is blond and blue-eyed and promises to become a proper German lad."[193]

Such statements inevitably lead to a controversial question: what did German civilians actually know about the provenance of these children? By all accounts, the fostering system operated under a veil of deception woven from half-truths and outright lies. Lebensborn officials openly divulged to prospective guardians that many of the "orphans" housed in their institutions came from abroad, yet spun the fiction that they were all Volksdeutsche whose parents had been "cruelly murdered" by the partisans, when only a small minority actually fit this description. In official parlance, Nazi bureaucrats referred to them as "foundlings" (*Findelkinder*), and Himmler explicitly forbade subordinates from circulating the term "Germanizable Polish children" because he feared it would invite stigma.[194] With that being said, it did not take foster parents very long to figure out that something was amiss. The children often could not or would not speak German, or did so only in thick accents, and more than a few managed to re-establish contact with relatives in their lands of origin despite strenuous efforts to prevent such correspondence.[195] Suspicions were hardly allayed when their actual ages did not correspond with those listed on their (phony) birth certificates, or when other biographical records began abruptly at the time of their seizure by German authorities.[196] The manner in which this took place, in fact, became an open secret in towns and villages across the Reich. Majewska was almost positive her caretakers possessed at least some inkling that she had been forcibly removed from her childhood home, and a certain Frau Bogensberger admitted this knowledge plainly to neighbors who wondered why the young girl entrusted to her care went by the name Czerminska.[197] After prodding Lebensborn officials for further background information on her two foster children, another woman in Baden discovered that the Gestapo had executed their biological father, a Czech professor from Prague, and interned their mother in a concentration camp. She resolved to hang onto the siblings anyway.[198] That many people on the home front embraced the

[192] See Uebe's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1060-1063.
[193] BA NS 19/1267/25: Hermann H. to Himmler, March 14, 1943.
[194] ITS 4.1.2.7/81795861: Affidavit of Annaliese Jansky, undated; BA R 186/35: Greifelt, "Anordnung 67/I," February 19, 1942.
[195] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 507; Koop, *Dem Führer*, 176.
[196] See the lengthy correspondence between Lebensborn medical director Dr. Gregor Ebner and numerous foster parents concerning the age of their adoptive children in BA NS 48/30.
[197] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 140, 149.
[198] NARA/NMT M894/15/Doc. NO-4822: Affidavit of Maria Heinz-Wisswede, undated.

designation "children of good blood" is symptomatic of how resonant the underlying concepts of Nazi Germanization policy had become within the realm of popular consciousness. Otto Uebe's postwar statements offer further evidence of this synergy; while acknowledging that his adoptive son was Polish, he reasoned that the boy must have stemmed from German ancestors because he had blond hair, blue eyes, and a tall build – and because the RuSHA had "verified" his descent.[199]

Once they left state custody and went out into the world, the everyday lives of abductees closely paralleled those of children who came to the Reich with their families via the Re-Germanization Procedure. It is therefore convenient to examine their experiences in tandem. First and foremost, subjects between the ages of ten and eighteen were usually compelled to enroll in the Hitler Youth or the BDM (though it is noteworthy that mandatory registration did not begin in earnest for WED candidates until the spring of 1943, after the formal onset of the "exclusion procedure").[200] To supervise ideological indoctrination at the local level, each of these agencies commissioned special "Germanization specialists" who reported directly to the Hitler Youth delegate embedded with the RKF Staff Main Office in Berlin.[201] There were some foster parents who ignored SS guidelines and did not force their new children to join Nazi youth organizations, often because they preferred to impart them with a religious upbringing instead, though many took an active role in facilitating the Nazis' educational objectives.[202] The guardians of Maria Hanfova, one of the survivors of Lidice, told her "that I would become a German; that I had to be against the Czechs; that I should never speak in Czech."[203] Anna Zakowska affirmed that her guardians "loved me in their own way, yet also tried to efface what remained of my Polishness."[204] In a similar vein, Germans who hosted WED candidates often sought to sequester youngsters from the influence of their loved ones, in effect becoming kidnappers themselves. The employer of Franciszek Drozdzinski, for example, sent his daughter Anielie to stay with a neighbor, Frau Butter. When Franciszek's son went to retrieve Anielie after weeks went by with no word from her, Butter hit him with a cane and chased him out of the house.[205] Stanislaw Stanczak likewise complained that his daughter "lives in a rented room, and our mistress does not allow the rest of the family to visit her."[206]

Of course, some unscrupulous individuals only opted to take in foreign-born "orphans" for the financial incentives to be gained (such as tax deductions, state allowances, and extra ration cards), or did

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[199] See Uebe's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1060-1063.
[200] BA R 49/73/153: Creutz to HSSPFs, April 9, 1943.
[201] USHMMA 15.021M/6/46/23: Creutz to HSSPFs, March 6, 1943; BA NS 19/31/1-3: Cassel to Brandt, September 15, 1943.
[202] See the testimony of Lucie Bergner in LOC/NMT, 1021-1027.
[203] See the testimony of Maria Hanfova in LOC/NMT, 1035-1037.
[204] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 200-201.
[205] 3/20a/98: Drozdzinski, 6.22.41.
[206] 5/31/55-56: Stanczak, 9.23.40.

so with the sole intention of using them as cheap labor.[207] Piotr Borkowski and his sister Halinka spent their days cooking and doing laundry for a pair of innkeepers, all the while suffering from constant hunger. At the farm where she resided, Janina Mikolajczyk had to manage the entire household, tend to the cattle, and help out in the fields, even though she was only eight years old.[208] Re-Germanizable Poles detailed similar scenes of German bosses forcing their children to work "as if they were adults." And regardless of whether or not they belonged to the WED, such exploitation was usually backed up by the threat of violence. Pawlak alleged that his host, Herr Schmidt, struck the children almost daily.[209] Emilie Frejova, another girl taken from Lidice, had nothing but good things to say about her trustee, a police officer named Otto Kuckuck; the man's wife, however, appeared in her reminiscence as a vicious tyrant: "The woman was hysterical; she beat me and insulted me all the time for no reason."[210] In many instances, corporal punishment ensued when adoptees refused to accept their new parents as such. Wieslaw Kuligowski would not play the part of a loving and dutiful son no matter how much his foster mother punished him: "I knew that my real mama had died when I was six years old. She died right in front of me… Obviously I could never forget that."[211] Nazi youth authorities did have structures of oversight in place to curb this sort of maltreatment. Social workers from the youth offices made routine visits to the households in question and sometimes removed young wards from the custody of abusive or negligent overseers.[212] But transfers were rare and usually only came about at the behest of the foster parents themselves, almost always because a child stubbornly clung to his or her foreign nationality. After discovering that Slawomir Gradomski had established friendly relations with Polish forced laborers in Pongau, Nazi functionaries quickly moved him to another household in Bischofshofen.[213] Francka Belehar, one of the "bandit children" taken from Slovenia, wound up at a juvenile detention facility in Hüttenbach for having stated that she would not work for the Germans. Lebensborn personnel in Oberweis also deported at least one girl back to Poland after her appointed caretakers expressed dissatisfaction with her attitude.[214]

Even when they did manage to stay in the same spot, "racially valuable" youths often could not escape the sting of social ostracism. This was especially true for WED candidates. Although the guidelines issued to civilian hosts emphasized that "The children of re-Germanizable families must come to know the German way of living through interactions with German children," a number of hosts

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[207] See Uebe's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1060-1063. Also see LOC/NMT, 1072-1073, Doc. NO-117: Edelmann to Malisch (English transcript), May 17, 1943.

[208] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 155.

[209] 5/32/56: Kwasniewska, 4.11.41; 3/20a/25: Pawlak, 1.19.41.

[210] Koop, *Dem Führer*, 161.

[211] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 146.

[212] Ibid., 153-156, 198-199. Also see Hanfova's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1035-1037.

[213] See the testimony of Slawomir Gradomski in LOC/NMT, 1002-1005.

[214] See Rezman's testimony in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 306. Also see Koop, *Dem Führer*, 177.

declared such relationships taboo and forbade them, presumably because they did not want their own sons or daughters mingling with the help. Marcin Raczyk and Stanislaw Stepniewski confided that their little ones found it extremely difficult to make friends because local Germans insisted that they play alone.[215] Given the extent to which their origins became public knowledge, it was also not uncommon for Germanizable "orphans" to become targets of popular bigotry and discrimination at the hands of their peers. "Whenever I went walking through the village," Alojz Zorko recalled, "the German children teased me and called me a 'Gypsy bandit.'"[216] Some experienced this outsider status even in otherwise benign home environments. Hence, while Janina Mikolajczyk did not have to endure long working hours or physical abuse, she was also not allowed to share a table with her foster family during mealtimes.[217]

Above all, these children had a hard time fitting in at school. When it came to WED candidates under the age of eighteen, the Nazi regime offered a range of educational opportunities that would theoretically open the door to social advancement and cultural integration (trade schools and "training farms," for instance) so that "even when re-Germanizable youths are settled together with their parents, they can still be introduced to proper pedagogical conditions in spite of this fact."[218] Be that as it may, the public school system obviously functioned as the main institutional vehicle of assimilation. Somewhat surprisingly, Himmler's race and resettlement experts did not initially prepare any kind of special arrangement that would enable these children to attend German primary schools (or Volksschulen) – a necessity in light of laws that banned Polish migrant workers from their premises. Only after individual parents began clamoring for this right with ever greater frequency did the SS finally step in.[219] By order of the Reich Education Ministry on July 5, 1941, teachers all over the country were obligated to admit re-Germanizable children into their classrooms and set up auxiliary facilities to accommodate those with poor German language skills.[220] In the spring of 1942, the VoMi also started bringing in female Nazi activists to handle the tutelage of minors who still lived in the camps (particularly Slovenes), which included lessons in history, mathematics, biology, and home economics.[221] Yet regardless of who had direct responsibility over schooling or where it took place, the purpose of the curriculum remained the same: "to facilitate the complete immersion [of these children] into the community of local youth," a goal

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[215] LOC/NMT, 813-815, Doc. NO-87: "Memorandum for plant leaders concerning the utilization of persons suitable for re-Germanization" (English transcript), September, 1941; 2/20/12: Raczyk, 10.27.40; 5/35/15-16: Stepniewski, 5.29.42.

[216] See Zorko's testimony in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 183.

[217] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 155.

[218] BA R 49/73/77: Fähndrich to Rust, September 30, 1941; BA R 49/73/147: Hintze to Dongus and HSSPFs, January 1, 1943.

[219] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 203: Holfelder to Regierungspräsidenten in Hesse-Nassau, October 23, 1940; 2/20/39: Ladzinski, 6.30.40; 2/20/18: Szykowski, 9.23.40.

[220] BA R 49/73/46: Zschintzsch to Landräte, Reichsstatthaltern, Frick, and Himmler, July 5, 1941.

[221] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Gifhorn to Regierungspräsident Lunebürg, March 17, 1942; VoMi Einsatzführung Württemberg, "Rundschreiben Nr. 329," May 26, 1942, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 223. Also see Brigitte Entner, "Deportation" in Malle, *Die Vertreibung*, 174-176.

that could only be achieved, according to one superintendent in Lower Saxony, if they were "regarded as full-fledged Germans and treated just like other pupils."[222]

It soon became clear that not all Nazis shared this goal. The educational objectives of the SS generated considerable pushback in the provinces, where many civil servants willfully disregarded directives from the administrative center in Berlin. Some claimed that they could not divert funds to create additional language departments; others chose not to register the sons and daughters of WED candidates for enrollment in the Volksschulen.[223] There were also numerous teachers who simply recoiled at the prospect of non-German students in their classrooms, not to mention civilian employers who kept them home to work.[224] A survey conducted by the SD in late 1942 revealed that fewer than half of all re-Germanizable children from the eligible age cohorts were actually going to school at that time.[225] Such an alarmingly high rate of absences was compounded by the seemingly substandard academic performance of those who did matriculate. The superintendent for Lüneburg county observed in June 1942 that almost none of the re-Germanizable schoolchildren in his district could speak German – a handicap he blamed on their Polish-speaking parents: "If the father or mother were able to help them at home, then their progress would naturally be much more rapid."[226] A colleague in nearby Uelzen proffered a similar conclusion: "The parents of our foreign children present certain difficulties because it is no longer easy for them to learn the German language, though many are just unwilling to try."[227] What stands out most conspicuously about these reports is the manner in which they conflated supposed intellectual shortcomings with cultural backwardness and biological inferiority. A teacher at the Volksschule Mitlechtern in Hesse, for example, described one of his re-Germanizable pupils as follows: "The child still understands very little German, so there can be no talk of success… He seems to be gifted with only limited aptitude. In terms of character, he does not make a good impression; he is intolerable, often dishonest, and seldom clean… His mother does not understand how to educate the boy properly."[228] In other cases, the ethnic-political significance of such allegations took center stage. The superintendent in Harburg county imputed the disobedience of one male student to his parents' ostensibly anti-German attitude: "Neither [of them] can muster a single word in German, and even if they have been Germanized, they still view Germany as their enemy." The headmaster at the Volksschule Tangendorf passed along

[222] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Uelzen to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, May 30, 1942; NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Gifhorn to Meyer and Kreitlow, January 20, 1942.

[223] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Regierungspräsident Lüneburg to Landrat Soltau, December 16, 1940; NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Landrat Harburg to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, August 5, 1941.

[224] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 187: Landrat Fulda to Hamacher, January 27, 1941; NLH Hann. 310, Nr. 358, Bd. 7: Dörhöfer to Volksschule Brockhöfe, November 20, 1941.

[225] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/11-21: Ehlich, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Eindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Fremdstämmigen," December 10, 1942.

[226] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Lüneburg to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, June 6, 1942.

[227] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Uelzen to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, May 30, 1942.

[228] HStD G 15, M 1791: Schulleiter Mitlechtern to Kreisschulamt Heppenheim, May 21, 1942.

comparable remarks on the behavior of another young boy: "We have noticed time and again that he does not want to be counted as a member of the community. He is probably encouraged in this by his parents."[229] In order to eliminate "detrimental influences," some teachers suggested tighter police surveillance of suspect families, and one even recommended deporting them back to Poland.[230]

In truth, problems at school, to say nothing of truancy, were most likely a product of the hostility these children encountered in their everyday dealings with German classmates and instructors. This was something that foreign-born "orphans" had to cope with as well: "The children tormented me from the very beginning," remembered Emilie Frejova, "They called me a Czech pig, a Czech strumpet, and so forth. They attacked me and I had to defend myself."[231] Halinka Borkowska's teacher made all the "eastern children" sit in the back row of the classroom, where they became the butt of derogatory jokes. On one occasion, when Halinka's teacher overheard her speaking in Polish, she shouted, "You are a Polish scoundrel! How could you? Hitler has given you your name and your daily bread! How can you be so ungrateful?"[232] An incident related by Stanislaw Musislek in a January 1943 letter to the RuSHA likewise illustrates the malfeasance of provincial educators and the contemptuous air they instilled in their German students: "The kindergarten teacher here did not want the other children to play with my daughter, so she told them that my daughter had lice and scabies. She looked on with approval while the children threw stones at my daughter and called her a Polish bitch… When I came upon this teacher one day on my way home from work, I punched her in the face."[233]

When paired with accusations of subversive conduct, it is not all that difficult to see why these sorts of outbursts led the Nazis to suppose that many "bearers of lost German blood" were unfit to raise children, which simultaneously impugned their "capacity for re-Germanization." While the long working hours demanded by employers certainly undercut their ability to maintain parental supervision, woefully indigent material circumstances did far more to crystalize this impression of negligence. As we saw in previous chapters, WED candidates appealed to their SS benefactors for higher wages and financial compensation with the argument that they would otherwise be unable to provide for their families. Few could deny the grim reality of their impoverishment when successive letters arrived with tales of filthy children clad in nothing but rags and infants who had perished from disease and malnutrition. Culpability for such atrocious living conditions sometimes lay just as much with agents of the Nazi bureaucracy as it did with miserly hosts. Although the Reich Finance Ministry had sanctioned the disbursement of child support to re-Germanizable families in March 1941, it was administrators on the ground who decided whether to grant these subsidies, and they often denied requests by citing from a list of disqualifying

[229] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Harburg to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, May 26, 1942.
[230] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Lüneburg to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, June 6, 1942
[231] Koop, *Dem Führer*, 161.
[232] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 160.
[233] 5/35/137-138: Musislek, 1.22.43.

exceptions: that the applicants were "asocials" or "community aliens"; that they had "serious congenital defects" or an "alien-blood-share"; that they did not "guarantee a purposeful application of child support" or would "not become useful ethnic comrades"; that they failed to demonstrate that "a German education for all the children of the household is assured" or were "unwilling to serve the German people and Reich in fidelity"[234] The RKF complained as late as March 1942 that regional officials had undermined the assimilation process by depriving WED candidates of welfare payments for their children.[235]

In the end, the race and resettlement experts of the SS blamed WED candidates for their own penury and used it as an excuse to take away their children as well, bringing the kidnapping campaign back home to Germany itself. Once again, the crucial turning point came in February 1942; that month, Greifelt and Hofmann received verbal orders from Himmler to draw up a decree authorizing the Gestapo to confiscate children from re-Germanizables who "present unusual difficulties" and turn them over to the Lebensborn Society.[236] When Greifelt later released his guidelines for the "exclusion procedure" in December 1942, they stipulated that local authorities treat re-Germanizable Polish youths who "have no-one to look after them" (because their relatives had either been arrested or deported) in accordance with Ordinance 67/I – or rather, in the same way as "racially valuable orphans" from the Warthegau.[237] This is what happened to the children of Marianna Frontczak, who was expelled from the WED and sent back to Łódź in the spring of 1943 on account of her "unruly and defiant behavior."[238] In the meantime, Himmler had instructed Lebensborn officials in September of that year to assume custody over the sons and daughters of re-Germanizable Slovenes who had tried to escape from the VoMi camps and been detained or put to death as a result. He later expanded the scope of this mandate to encompass all "ethnically and politically endangered children" among the Absiedler from Upper Carniola and Lower Styria. [239] That *völkisch* concerns drove this agenda as well as can be gleaned from the use of kidnapping as a tool with which to break recalcitrants. Upon hearing in January 1943 that the RKF had approved the transfer of young WED candidates to the Deutsche Heimschulen, the Nazi Party leadership in Thuringia announced that "based in part on the political or behavioral stance of the parents, in part on the lack of suitable educational supervision, the separation of these children from their parents appears desirable and

[234] LNWD BR 1312, Nr. 147, Bd. 44: Gutenberger to Oberfinanzpräsidium in Düsseldorf, Cologne, Hannover, and Münster, October 10, 1941; BA R 49/73/23-24: Reichministerium der Finanzen, "Richtlinien für die Erhebung des Widerspruchgs gegen die Gewährung von Kinderbeihilfe," unsigned, March 4, 1941.

[235] BA R 49/73/112-113: Hintze to Wagner, March 11, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/7: Hofmann to Dongus.

[236] BA NS 2/89/112: Hofmann to Schultz, February 12, 1942. Also see LOC/NMT, 649-650. If Hofmann and Greifelt actually did compose such a document, it has yet to be discovered, though Himmler's command most likely just became part of the exclusion degree. Interestingly, unwed re-Germanizable women were permitted to check in to Lebensborn homes in the event of pregnancy; see BA NS 2/82/172-173: Hofmann to Sollmann, September 25, 1942.

[237] BA R 59/46/47-48: Greifelt, BA R 59/46/47-48: Greifelt to Kaltenbrunner, Hofmann, Dongus, and HSSPFs, December 12, 1942.

[238] ITS 0.1/11342950: Weithase to Bethge, March 30, 1943.

[239] LOC/NMT, 899-900, Doc. NO-3220: Himmler, "Decree concerning punitive measures against Slovenes and their families escaping from camps in Silesia" (English transcript), September 22, 1942; LOC/NMT [vol. V], 108; Brückner to Landau, March 4, 1943, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 295.

unavoidable. We must see to the elimination of detrimental influences, especially with parents who believe that our measures will not affect them. We must attempt to win over these children for Germandom. It will then be easy to exert pressure on their parents."[240] Hofmann summed up the point much more succinctly: "Such measures are expected to have a special educational value."[241]

Yet even as deep sense of irritation compelled the Nazis to exploit children as hostages for the good behavior of their parents, they still had one very good reason to celebrate: the Germanization of foreign youth, like the WED more generally, did have its fair share of "success stories," at least not from the perspective of Nazi youth leaders and educational officials on the ground. Reports from Lower Saxony indicated that "The families themselves have had a hard time settling in; they are rejected by much of the local population. The same situation replicates itself in school among the children." But those who could speak German, or managed to learn how, made "superb progress" and rarely showed "inner resistance."[242] The evaluation of two "Germanizable Polish girls" in Soltau read, "Both have made friends with the native schoolchildren. Their performance is exemplary. They do all of their schoolwork with the necessary care and tidiness."[243] One eleven year old girl was "acclaimed as the best student in her class."[244] After traveling to various schools in the vicinity of Darmstadt, the county superintendent could not help but gush about the "progress" of re-Germanizable pupils, whom he described as "intellectually awakened," "good and clean in terms of appearance," "well-behaved and eager to learn."[245] Such praise naturally went a long way to convincing their parents that they had not erred in coming to Germany, which rendered their "sedentarization" far more palatable. In one letter to the RuSHA, Aleksander Zimmer noted with pride that the local headmaster had given his children a reward because they learned German so quickly. "We are very happy with our location," he added.[246]

For all the suffering and trauma that most of these youths went through, it would be a mistake to presume that Germans invariably looked upon them as an unwanted burden or expendable resource. Some overseers became surrogate parents to their young re-Germanizable guests, going out of their way to include them in the familial circle and treat them as regular members of the household. Marga Sondej said that her mistress, Frau Bühler, was "like a mother to us all," while the butcher who took in Johann Tomczak doted on him and his siblings "as if we were his own children."[247] The same feelings of warmth and compassion also shaped the experiences of "racially valuable orphans," many of whom later testified

[240] BA R 59/46/53: Vogt to Kreisbeauftragte für Volkstumsfragen in Thuringia, January 16, 1943.
[241] BA NS 2/89/112: Hofmann to Schultz, February 12, 1942.
[242] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Soltau to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, May 29, 1942; NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Lüneburg to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, June 6, 1942.
[243] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Soltau to Teichmann, May 12, 1942.
[244] USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/11-21: Ehlich, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Eindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Fremdstämmigen," December 10, 1942.
[245] HStD G 15, M 1791: Schulleiter Mitlechtern to Kreisschulamt Heppenheim, May 21, 1942.
[246] 3/20a/91: Zimmer, 6.30.41.
[247] 5/32/7: Sondej, 1.10.41; 3/20a/17: Tomczak, 1.12.41.

that their German foster parents genuinely loved them and looked after their well-being with the utmost solicitude.[248] Indeed, more than a few stewards consistently maintained after the war that they had acted "out of purely humanitarian motives," and there probably was a good deal of truth to this.[249] It is also not altogether implausible that nationalist fervor inspired some ordinary citizens with "a desire to do something special for Germandom," as one Nazi apparatchik put it.[250] In most cases, German couples turned to Lebensborn for the same reasons that motivate people to foster or adopt children in any modern society: to assuage their loneliness, to compensate for the loss of loved ones, to satisfy a basic parental instinct. The tragic irony of the kidnapping campaign is that, like the WED as a whole, it wed the very best of human intentions and emotional drives to the most criminal of state-sponsored endeavors. The files of the youth offices are filled with stories of "foundlings" who took to their new families like fish in water, which was all the more natural for the younger ones who had no memory of their parents. One social worker named Paula Deinhammer recorded the following impressions after a visit to the home of young Waclawa Suwart, or "Waltraud Schubart," in 1944: "Schubart is located with the Angelberger family in Neumarkt am Wallersee. The child has heretofore acquitted herself well in every respect, although she is known to be a bit talkative… It is overwhelmingly obvious that the child has developed a good rapport with her foster parents. She is intensely affectionate, loving, and obedient. The foster parents are also very fond of her." Deinhammer's superiors passed along her report to Bartels' office in the Warthegau, as if to encourage them to keep up the good work.[251]

Despite public awareness of their foreign origins, abductees often found solace and acceptance outside the confines of home as well. According to Irene Majewska's recollection, "The people [in our town] were all very kind… Whenever I had to run errands and go see another family, they were all very nice to me." She quickly developed a close friendship with her neighbor's daughter, who recalled after the war that the two were "almost inseparable, practically sisters." Young Ryszard Sztuk found a similarly welcoming reception from his Austrian peers, one of whom likewise later insisted, "Richard was no outsider… he was fully integrated."[252] It seems that the initial rudeness of German schoolchildren lessened over time once they had a chance to get to know their foreign-born classmates. As Maria Hanfova stated during her postwar testimony, "In the beginning it was bad because I was a Czech and I didn't belong among them… Then, later on, when the children were friendlier to me, it was much better."[253] Anna Zakowska explained candidly why "foundlings" like her and Maria were so eager to curry favor: "I had new friends and wanted nothing more than to be recognized as a German and not 'the

[248] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 509.
[249] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 143.
[250] USHMMA 05.008M/7/32: Gaujugendamt to Stadtjugendamt Litzmannstadt, January 7, 1941.
[251] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 153-154.
[252] Ibid., 157, 160.
[253] See Hanfova's testimony in LOC/NMT, 1035-1037.

Polish brat'… I was an eight year old child who had already suffered so much in life, and I needed the love and company of other people."[254] Knowledge of these budding relationships soon spread throughout the various tiers of the Nazi administrative hierarchy, where they met with nigh unanimous approval. The superintendent in Uelzen remarked in May 1942 that the sons and daughters of Polish WED candidates had "blended in to such an extent that the village no longer views them as foreign."[255] According to the EWZ officials who evaluated Slovenian children in the summer of 1943, they too showed signs of an "effective assimilation into the indigenous population" which left them far more "refined and awakened" than their elders.[256] A Gestapo functionary in Stuttgart submitted equally auspicious findings, having observed that re-Germanizable youths all over Württemberg had picked up the Swabian dialect through their regular interactions with local youngsters and would soon be "fully absorbed into the German ethnic community."[257] Even more so with children than with their adult counterparts, the most disturbing thing about Nazi Germanization policy is that in many cases it seems to have worked – something the Nazis were well aware of. As one high-ranking NSDAP official opined in June 1944, "There are no political objections to the naturalization of these children. They have been so extensively influenced by German schools and youth organizations that in most cases they have overcome the negative effects of their parents' anti-German attitude."[258]

This measure of "success" points to several overlapping conclusions. First, the "child-stealing" campaign perpetrated by the National Socialist regime during the Second World War was definitely not an historical anomaly. Indeed, the custom of taking children as spoils of war dates back to the very dawn of recorded time, and the usage of terms like Janissaries and aborigines itself shows that Himmler and his associates were well aware of comparable antecedents from a variety of different cultures. In confiscating children from their real and imagined enemies, the Nazis pursued a biopolitical mandate of cultural assimilation derived in no small part from a wider legacy of nationalist competition in East-Central Europe and all the demographic anxieties that came with it. Yet much like their predecessors in North America, Australia, and elsewhere, they were able to absorb young captives into the metropolitan society precisely because they unleashed extreme levels of coercive violence to achieve their goals. Second, the chronological development of this enterprise reveals that it must be understood as an outgrowth of the Re-Germanization Procedure, a reaction to the Nazis' disenchantment with adult inductees as well an indulgence of their omnipresent craving for "lost German blood." The race and resettlement experts of the SS adopted tactics their rivals had originally introduced in Western Europe and transplanted them to the

[254] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 200-201.
[255] NLH Hann. 180, Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Schulrat Uelzen to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, May 30, 1942.
[256] NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943.
[257] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.
[258] BA R 186/3: Hofmann to Bormann, Greifelt, Ehlich, and Hildebrandt, June 13, 1944.

East on a much larger and more devastating scale. But it was the abusive and disdainful manner in which many Germans treated WED candidates in the Reich, along with the indignant defiance this stoked among the latter, that actually triggered the switch to wholesale "child-stealing" in early 1942, even if the ideological groundwork had been prepared long before. The Germanization of children facilitated the same objective of biological rejuvenation, yet did so in a more concentrated and much simpler form by raking in subjects whose youth augured enhanced vitality yet also usually rendered them incapable of putting up resistance. Third and finally, the kidnapping and fostering process created yet another avenue of mutual interaction between ordinary people on the home front and the purveyors of racial consolidation in the occupied territories. Consciously or otherwise, whether acting on motives pure or unsavory, Germans who volunteered to take in foreign abductees endowed the "child-stealing" campaign with its *raison d'être*, conferring tacit yet tangible legitimacy upon the empire-building of the National Socialist regime. We will see this synergy at work again with repercussions just as direct in our next chapter.

Chapter Nine: Home and Back Again

"Bearers of German blood cannot treat it as private property."

–Odilo Globocnik

In September 1941, Alfred Thies, the owner of an estate outside the town of Celle, paid a visit to his friend Wilhelm Dörhöfer, the SS officer responsible for managing the Re-Germanization Procedure in Lower Saxony. Thies had good news for his comrade. He already employed one family of "racially valuable" Poles on his farm, who were by all accounts making "excellent progress," and now he had another prospective candidate in mind – nineteen year old Janina Bortosik, whom he described as "an immaculate, distinctly Nordic-looking Polish maiden… admirably hard-working in the home and in the fields." Intrigued by this pitch, Dörhöfer stopped by the estate a short time later to meet Janina and see for himself whether she was everything Thies promised. He was not disappointed: "By all means, we must Germanize this girl," he wrote to HSSPF Pancke, "she matches our desired image exactly." Janina did not protest this objectifying, sexualized appraisal of her personal self-worth; actually, she encouraged it, ensuring Dörhöfer that all six of her siblings also possessed the same blonde hair and blue eyes, as did her father and mother – both farmers by trade who had written to their daughter and "expressed a desire to come to Germany along with the other children." Dörhöfer immediately requested that Pancke get in touch with the RuSHA, not just to screen Janina, but to have the Eignungsprüfer locate her relatives in Poland and, if the results of their evaluation proved favorable, transfer them to Germany.[1]

That same month, six hundred miles to the east in the small Polish village of Wałowice-Kolonia, a seventy year old man named Stanislaw Greber sat down for a chat with another dedicated SS functionary, who we will refer to as Huld since his name remains unknown. The conversation revolved around the origins of Greber's ancestors, a topic he initially claimed to know nothing about, before recalling that in his youth some of the locals had referred to his father as a Swabian. Thanks to information helpfully provided by German neighbors, Huld discovered that Greber was in fact the descendant of crofters from Lower Saxony who had migrated to the countryside south of Lublin around the year 1750. When Huld traveled on to the nearby commune of Świeciechów Duży, however, he came across a much more dispiriting scene. While lauding the inhabitants of the village for their "orderly and clean impression," he was perturbed by one simple fact: "Unfortunately, the search for German blood

[1] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 185: Dörhöfer to Pancke, September 23, 1941.

proceeds inconclusively here, because neither the mayor, nor the priests, nor the other residents can remember any German forefathers."[2]

There is a dominant assumption running through much of the historiography on the wartime Third Reich that the stories of Bortosik and Greber would seem to disprove. Despite being separated by vast distances, their experiences shared remarkable parallels that transcended the actual physical expanse that lay between them. And yet in most accounts of this period that deal with Nazi *Volkstumspolitik*, Germany and the occupied territories are depicted as almost hermetically sequestered and fundamentally disparate spaces, as if empire-building was a solely external phenomenon, isolated from and unrelated to what went on inside the fatherland (and vice versa). The present chapter seeks to refute this misconception by demonstrating that the "hunt for good blood" functioned through an exchange of conventions that linked the German metropole with its imperial fringe. As the social, cultural, and economic repercussions of total war became increasingly visible to civilians on the domestic front, the Re-Germanization Procedure grew ever larger via numerous points of interface that connected them with Nazi officials stationed on the frontier. In the pages that follow, we will examine how these interstices produced similar situations at home and abroad (in this case using the example of eastern Poland) in order to illustrate an additional nexus between state and non-state actors that helped propel the Germanization campaign forward while simultaneously subverting the effort to establish stable racial boundaries.

By 1942, the most accessible and potentially abundant fount of "lost German blood" lay within the borders of the Reich itself. Since the outbreak of war, the demographic makeup of Germany and Austria had changed dramatically. With millions of foreign laborers toiling on farms and in factories, residents of almost every village, town, and city grew accustomed to the presence of substantial non-German populations living in their midst. It is little wonder, then, that the race examiners of the RuSHA demanded the right to evaluate these people too, especially Polish laborers whom they did not have a chance to vet beforehand. After traveling across the countryside back in June 1940 and getting a firsthand look at itinerant Polish workers (whom he denigrated as "the scum of humanity"), Otto Hofmann called for the implementation of measures to "eradicate the worst of these creatures" and thereby prevent the "bastardization of German blood."[3] Some local prefects also saw the usefulness of such an initiative, albeit in far more open-handed terms. In November of that year, the Landrat in Celle, for instance, suggested "an extension of Germanization measures to Polish families who have been present in Germany for a long time."[4] Leading figures within the SS treated this idea with skepticism at first. Greifelt claimed

[2] Karol Marian Pospieszalski, ed., *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. VI*: *Hitlerowskie "prawo" okupacyjne w Polsce* (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1958), 214.

[3] USHMMA 15.021M/1/1/35-36: Hofmann, "Aktenvermerk über den Besuch beim SS-OA," June 21-26, 1940.

[4] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 118-119, Dörhöfer to Pancke, November 11, 1940. Initially, Poles who were long-time residents of Germany (in the Ruhr above all, though also in easterly provinces like Lower Silesia) had to apply for citizenship through the normal channels, though it appears that at least some ended up in the WED; see USHMMA

in July that "an investigation of Polish workers who were transported to the Reich in previous months is not possible for technical reasons."[5] Himmler nevertheless decided in October 1940 to permit the RuSHA "to select racially valuable families for Germanization from among the large numbers of Polish civilian workers in Germany."[6] The operation began that month, limited initially to prisoners of war; in January 1941, it grew to encompass all Polish seasonal laborers.[7] Only in mid-1942, however, did the frequency of examinations start to skyrocket, just as the impressment of foreign workers assumed a truly colossal scale. This correlation offers perhaps the clearest possible evidence of the extent to which racial and economic objectives not only intertwined, but shared a certain complementarity. On the one hand, the screening of "ethnic aliens" in Germany had a prophylactic function (as Hofmann emphasized): to identify and segregate those who threatened to contaminate the body politic.[8] On the other hand, the mass importation of foreign workers afforded the Eignungsprüfer a one of a kind opportunity to mine for "Nordic blood" right in their own backyards. With both of these facets, the exclusive and the inclusive, we get our first glimpse of the astonishing speed at which policies introduced abroad found their way back home.

The race examiners had succeeded in turning all of Germany into a laboratory of racial selection; now they devised a bureaucratic protocol to handle requests for admission into the Re-Germanization Procedure. Most of the time, the HSSPFs fielded recommendations and passed them on to Günther Stier at the RKF Staff Main Office in Berlin, who forwarded lists of potential candidates to Schultz's protégé at the RuSHA Race Office, Erwin Klinger, who in turn disseminated contracts to perform examinations back down the chain of command to the RuS-Führer stationed with each HSSPF.[9] The RuS-Führer then submitted their findings to Klinger and the head of the Aussenstelle in Łódź (Schwalm or Dongus), each of whom had a say in the final verdict.[10] The actual examinations usually took place at the recruitment offices of the Waffen-SS,[11] and we can get a good sense of the rate at which they occurred by looking at the number of "race cards" (*R-Karte*) allocated to the RuSHA officials who worked at these sites. In April 1942, one examiner in Baden-Württemberg placed an order for five hundred cards; that July, another in

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15.007/10/125/97: Springe to Barthelmes, June 11, 1942; HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 31: Rödel to Harders, February 29, 1944.

[5] Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 479-480.

[6] BA R 3601/2354/184-185: Schultz to Landesbauernschaften, October 7, 1940.

[7] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/22-25: Preuss, "Bericht über die Dienstbesprechung mit Dr. Bethge," October 10, 1940; USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/14: Klinger to Greifelt, January 8, 1941. The RMdI signed off in March; see USHMMA 15.021M/10/125/33-34: Greifelt to Hofmann, April 2, 1941. Also see R 49/73/50: Himmler, "Anordnung 42/I," July 23, 1941.

[8] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 475, 487-488.

[9] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/11: Stier to Hofmann, December 18, 1940; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/23: Klinger to Rauch, June 27, 1941. For information on Klinger, see BDC SSO/180A and RS/C5506.

[10] BA R 186/11: "Regelung der Aufnahme in das Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," unsigned, undated.

[11] USHMMA 15.021M/1/2/7: Schwalm to Fersch, January 7, 1941; HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1359, Bd. 254: Castagne to Gauamt für Volkstumsfragen Koblenz, July 7, 1944.

Franconia asked Klinger to deliver one thousand.[12] The RuS-Führer in SS-District Rhine-Westmark, Fritz Castagne, once approved sixty-seven individuals in a single day, and in southern Austria, HSSPF Rösener had an inspector roving the area on standby.[13] Although surviving statistics on the activity of the RuSHA within Germany are woefully incomplete, it appears that between January 1941 and January 1944 approximately twenty thousand foreign laborers were accepted into the WED in this way.[14]

Proposals for re-Germanization stemmed from a variety of different sources. Sometimes they came in at the behest of lower-level SS officers. In the summer of 1943, for example, one Sturmbannführer in Traben-Trarbach filed applications for two Polish teenagers with Castagne, making sure to inform him of their current whereabouts.[15] In other instances, it was Party apparatchiks, especially the Orts- and Kreisbauernführer of the Reich Food Estate, who brought constituents to the attention of the HSSPFs.[16] Civil servants did their part as well. The Landrat of Alfeld in Lower Saxony instructed underlings in May 1941 to register all eligible prospects within their districts; that same month, the mayor of Arendsee named twenty-three Polish laborers and prisoners of war to the Landrat in Osterburg.[17] According to an approving report from one RuS-Führer, "the Landräte routinely summon foreigners to our offices for an appraisal of their capacity for re-Germanization."[18] They were not only ones to thank. Members of virtually every appendage of the Nazi regime could sponsor someone for enrollment into the WED: the Wehrmacht, the Waffen-SS, the Reich Labor Service, the Organization Todt (the Nazis' civil engineering and construction outfit), the labor offices, the commandants of barracks that housed "ethnically alien workers," as well as any association of the NSDAP.[19] The personal feelings of the individual scarcely mattered at all. In Castagne's words, "The racial investigation of civilian laborers proceeds first and foremost according to racial-biological appearance… Thus, pro-German behavior should only be considered secondary."[20] When someone declared that they "placed no value on German citizenship," as Julian Bendkowski did, or "wanted to remain a Pole," as Josef Dlugoss did, or failed to show up on the scheduled date, as Felix Ryzek did, the Eignungsprüfer simply mustered the police bring

[12] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/45: Andrae to Klinger, April 29, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/78: Dietrich to Klinger, July 22, 1942.

[13] HStW Abt. 483 Nr. 7358, Bd. 6-7: Castagne to Berkelmann, April 1, 1943; BA NS 2/81/48-50: Rösener to Hofmann, August 8, 1942.

[14] The monthly figures of "Old Reich Examination Cases" on which this extrapolation is based can be found in USHMMA 15.021M/6/48/49-101. Because their registration took place in Germany, these people were not included in the transport lists compiled at the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Łódź. Isabel Heinemann puts the number at anywhere between several thousand families to tens of thousands of individuals; see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 479-480, 487-488.

[15] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1359, Bd. 410: Rössner to Castagne, June 10, 1943.

[16] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/41: Kaul to Fähndrich, July 19, 1941.

[17] NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim Acc. 132/90 Nr. 202: Hoffmann to Berndt, July 31, 1941; NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 176: Bürgermeister Arendsee to Landrat Osterburg, May 30, 1941.

[18] BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren, May 18, 1944.

[19] BA R 186/11: "Regelung der Aufnahme in das Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," unsigned, undated.

[20] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7358, Bd. 4: Castagne to Volkert, April 13, 1943.

them in by force and sometimes conducted examinations with the subject in handcuffs.[21] Still, this kind of bald coercion was actually rather unusual; there were more than enough aspirants willing to undergo racial classification, and many did whatever they could to sway the outcome in their favor, usually by swearing their undying loyalty to National Socialism. In April 1943, for example, Castagne presided over the case of two brothers, Ludwig and Stanislaus Kaminski, each of whom received a superlative racial grade, yet also proved to be "exceedingly compliant" and possessed of "a special love for Germandom."[22]

The majority of these interactions, however, originated with civilians, not with agents of the state. The WED had always given private citizens an opportunity to contribute to the "reclamation of lost German blood" by hosting candidates and supervising their acculturation; now they could press for additions to the *Volksgemeinschaft* as well, and many availed themselves of this prerogative with remarkable alacrity. Take the case of Fritz Harnasch, an estate-owner in the small town of Päwesin in Brandenburg, who recommended four of his Polish farmhands in March 1941. On May 24, Klinger notified him by mail that a race inspector would stop by the following week.[23] This kind of interest was hardly rare; some proprietors made a habit of offering up their employees as potential re-Germanizables. Between April and August 1943, one resident of Ahlhorn brought in individuals for the RuSHA to peruse on no less than five separate occasions.[24] A few well-connected elites and celebrities even had the SS track down old acquaintances in occupied Poland. In February 1941, Dongus journeyed to the General Government to seek out a girl from Siedlce on behalf of Count Nikolaus von Üxküll-Gyllenband.[25] The famous pilot Harald Berger solicited Klinger's aid in June 1942 to find and relocate a woman named Maria Rytyk from the Warthegau to his home in Germany.[26] Others saw no need to restrict themselves to Poles. In September 1942, the owner of a truck factory in Hannover wrote to the Landrat to endorse the screening of migrant workers from Hungary and Yugoslavia.[27] There was a further dimension to popular engagement as well: the outcome of the evaluation hinged rather heavily on whether the subject was "eligible for Germanization according to the judgment of the employer."[28] For the Eignungsprüfer even to consider someone for acceptance, their German backers first had to confirm that they made "an especially

[21] HStM 180 Marburg, Nr. 4874: Vernehmungsniederschrift: Julian Bendkowski, undated; USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/3: Waldeck to Dongus, Stier, and Klinger, January 5, 1942; HStM 180 Hersfeld, Nr. A 2762: Klinger to Ortspolizeibehörde Kerspenhausen, August 31, 1943; LOC/NMT, 1152-1153, Doc. NO-850: Jürs, "Circular on the Examination of Poles by the Waffen-SS" (English transcript), March 5, 1942.

[22] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7358, Bd. 5: Ratzeburg to Castagne, April 6, 1943.

[23] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/30: Stier to Hofmann, March 13, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/18: Klinger to Harnasch, May 24, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/25: Klinger to Schwalm and Stier, June 28, 1941.

[24] See the requests of Gustav F. in Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Staatsarchiv Oldenburg (=StO) Best. 136, Nr. 19592.

[25] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/161: Dongus to Creutz, January 31, 1941.

[26] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/66: Klinger to Berger, July 1, 1942.

[27] NLH Hann. 174 Alfeld, Nr. 16/1: Graeff to Landrat Alfeld, September 25, 1942.

[28] USHMMA 15.021M/1/3/30-31: Schwalm to Waldeck, January 7, 1941.

good impression" and were "very valuable on the basis of their previous behavior and performance."[29] Needless to say, this requirement furnished German civilians with considerable power over the definition of racial belonging within their communities, and sometimes they declared people "capable of Germanization" on their own – much to the annoyance of the RuSHA.[30]

The factors that inspired these seemingly benevolent deeds are difficult to ascertain, but can certainly be surmised. In this respect, historian James Lockhart's theory of "double mistaken identity" is quite handy. To illustrate the dynamics of cultural and religious interactions between aborigines and Iberians in colonial Latin America, Lockart outlined a situation in which "a given form or concept is functioning in the way familiar with its own tradition and is unaware or unimpressed by the other side's interpretation." The Re-Germanization Procedure created a similar "spirit of compromise," wherein ordinary civilians and Nazi officials could see the same transaction in vastly different ways yet nevertheless cultivate a "workable result minimally acceptable to both parties."[31] German proprietors were obviously reluctant to lose experienced workers whom the authorities would otherwise ship back home after their seasonal term of employment expired. The managers of the Thüringischen Zollwell A.G. in Schwarza, for instance, made it clear that they did not want to hand over two skilled laborers, Stefan Musial and Valentin Kaczmarek, and lobbied local constables as to "whether these men can be included in the Germanization process."[32] Even so, economic pragmatism alone cannot fully explain this move. If a given workplace did not lie in one of Himmler's designated zones, RKF officials transferred the persons in question anyway; they did not conceal this caveat from interested parties either. The inclusion of foreign laborers into the WED also entailed concessions from German businesses: they would have to treat their employees as Germans and could no longer exploit them with impunity.[33] Although some would not even pledge to abide by these regulations, most participating enterprises assented without complaint (the firm mentioned above agreed to care for the family members of Musial and Kaczmarek from the outset).

All of this is to say that, however misguided it may have been, we must not discount the salience of human magnanimity, a sense of moral fairness, or an altruistic inclination to help the less fortunate, each of which often existed in perfect harmony with economic self-interest. The actions of Alfred Thies are an excellent case in point. In a letter to Dörhöfer dated October 24, 1942, Thies sponsored the application of another young farmhand named Stanislawa on the following grounds: "The girl has distinguished herself through diligence in the fields. She would feel much more at home here if she were

[29] BA R 3601/2354/184-185: Schultz to Landesbauernschaften, October 7, 1940.
[30] USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/45-46: Klinger to Andrae, August 7, 1941.
[31] James Lockhart, *Of Things of the Indies: Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 99, 112.
[32] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/15: Waldeck to Dongus, Stier, and Klinger, January 6, 1942.
[33] See Greifelt's testimony in LOC/NMT, 791.

Germanized, which would also free her from having to return to poverty in Poland. Naturally her relatives in Poland are currently trying to bring about their Germanization too. Although Stanislawa does not so much look the Germanic type, she is very reliable and upstanding. I therefore ask that you expedite her evaluation."[34] Thies almost certainly had ulterior motives, but he also appears to have felt genuine concern for young Stanislawa's well-being, intended to reward industrious employees for their hard work, and sincerely believed that they had authenticated their "German roots" in one way or another.

In these circumstances, the "hunt for good blood" took on a life of its own, as one episode in Lower Silesia demonstrates quite effectively. In the spring of 1942, a group of smallholders and corporations banded together and petitioned the SS to "unlock" the province for re-Germanizable Poles. Although these employers had already certified applications for their workers – many of whom had lived in Germany for decades – they knew that a favorable racial verdict would trigger their removal, and they had no interest in replacing them with substitute laborers from Eastern Europe. HSSPF Ernst-Heinrich Schmauser soon took up their cause and leavened it with his own decidedly racialist spin. In a letter to Greifelt written that August, he listed a number of reasons to give the appellants what they wanted: Lower Silesia had been "a bastion of National Socialism during the time of struggle"; its "healthy peasant and ethnic structure" offered "a better guarantee for re-Germanization than areas of Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and Brandenburg with their large estates, serf barracks, and attendant political dangers"; blocking certain districts within the Gau would forestall "closer contact between the Germanizables and their old homeland"; above all, the transfer of laborers elsewhere would necessarily invite "a stream of inferior blood from the eastern territories," whereas Poles already residing in Lower Silesia betrayed a "predominantly Nordic-Dinaric constitution" with "strong Frankish traces" – a supposed clue that their ancestors had taken part in the great Germanic migrations of medieval times. Faced with such "compelling arguments," Himmler consented to Schmauser's proposition that fall.[35]

Regardless of their specific reasoning, those Germans who chose to vouch for foreign laborers normalized the underlying assumptions of Nazi racial imperialism, though they were not alone in this respect. Many non-German laborers volunteered for the WED of their own accord. Hermann Grotz testified that in Württemberg "These cases were quite frequent. We had days in which up to ten people came to my office to apply for re-Germanization."[36] Some appealed directly to the RuSHA Aussenstelle instead. In February 1941, Waleria Milowska wrote to Schwalm from Ermsleben am Harz in the hope of obtaining verification of her "German racial heritage." Sophie Pekula and Stanislawa Jeneschak did the

[34] NLH Hann. 310 I, Nr. 358, Bd. 65: Thies to Dörhöfer, October 24, 1942.

[35] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/89-90: Schmauser to Greifelt, August 23, 1942; USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/165: Behrends to Ehlich, Creutz, and Hofmann, October 9, 1942.

[36] See Grotz's testimony in LOC/NMT, 804-805.

same thing in December of that year.[37] Josef Zychla, to take another example, prevailed upon the SS in August 1943 to substantiate "that I belong to the German race and the German *Volk*."[38] These kinds of appeals became positively endemic once the Nazis began accepting applications for the Deutsche Volksliste from forced laborers and Poles who were long-time residents of Germany in May 1942.[39]

The motives that drove these people to sign up for recognition as Germans were as diverse as those that convinced Germans to support their claims. Some sought to ensure their children access to a basic education. The parents of Josef and Anna Bochen appealed to a schoolteacher in Celle in September 1941 with precisely this object in mind. The regional superintendent argued that the children should be allowed to attend the town Volksschule because they "make a good impression, have blue eyes and blond hair, and distinguish themselves in every respect from the other Polish youths in the community, who exhibit typical Polish characteristics." Upon reading this endorsement, the Landrat of Celle contacted HSSPF Pancke and underwrote the Bochens' bid for membership in the Re-Germanization Procedure.[40] In other instances, it was the desire to wed that prompted foreign-born individuals to come forward. A few SD officers urged a hard line on this issue, and Bethge demanded that the RuSHA reject people who sought access to the WED "solely because they want approval to marry." Klinger and his associates at the Race Office, however, ultimately ruled that "There are no objections to marriages between ethnic aliens and Germans if the person's capacity for Germanization has been confirmed."[41] Of course, the Eignungsprüfer tended to look more kindly upon fiancées from the "Germanic" countries (Norway, Denmark, and Holland, for instance), but there were no actual restrictions on which nationalities could potentially marry into Germandom. "The goal of our involvement in the approval of all foreigner marriages," one RuSHA functionary proclaimed, "is to prevent the German *Volk* from losing valuable German blood."[42] So it was that Reinhold Ratzeburg sanctioned the betrothal of Monique Motta, a French national, after a face-to-face assessment of her "racial phenotype" in November 1943 yielded a rating of RuS-II.[43] When the Ukrainian Nestor Pankowskyj and his German lover announced their intention to wed to the district court in Potsdam in the spring of 1944, the proceedings were forwarded to the RuSHA with

[37] 2/14/64: Milowska, 2.17.41; USHMMA 15.021M/5/36/93: Weithase to Klinger, December 9, 1941.

[38] 5/35/162: Zychla, 8.13.43.

[39] BA R 59/44/1: RMdI, "Durchführungsvorschriften zur Verordnung über die DVL, Behandlung der im Reich ansässigen Polnischstämmigen," unsigned, February 2, 1943. For a large sample of these proceedings, see HStM 180 Hersfeld, Nr. A 2771 and LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 20000 G. Also see BA R 49/73/152: Hintze to HSSPFs, April 8, 1943.

[40] NLH Hann. 180 Lüneburg Acc. 3/108, Nr. 14: Landrat Celle to Regierungspräsident Lüneburg, September 3, 1941.

[41] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/106: Bethge to Klinger, July 7, 1942; HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 32: Klinger to Simon, December 21, 1942. The same principle applied in the occupied territories too, though usually with the added caveat that newlyweds had to move to the Reich; see BA NS 47/26/18: Ahrens, "Vermerk für fremdvölkische Mischehen," undated. The blessing of the RuSHA meant that partners were absolved of the obligation to acquire a "marriage approval certificate" from the local Public Health Office; see BA NS 2/127/ Bd. 69: Hofmann to Himmler, January 27, 1941.

[42] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942.

[43] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7360, Bd. 147-148: Ratzeburg, "Dienstbericht vom 13.11.43 bis zum 17.11.43." undated.

word that "the Interior Ministry will agree to the union, but only if Pankowskyj is admitted into the Re-Germanization Procedure."[44]

It is not all that hard to understand why so many non-Germans would want to be counted among the "master race," especially if they hailed from Eastern Europe. These people had witnessed or experienced the depredations inflicted on those who lay outside the realm of racial privilege, and the temptation to embrace the obvious social and material benefits of Germanness must have been incredibly tough to resist. We also cannot ignore the likelihood that some really did develop feelings of affinity or national camaraderie with German neighbors. It would be wrong in either case to assert that most forced laborers were able to game the Nazi classificatory system, make it work to their advantage, and thereby gain a measure of control over their future.[45] But many of them certainly tried, and whether or not the gambit paid off, the attempt itself conferred legitimacy on that very system.

Once admitted, WED candidates unwittingly promoted the expansion of the program through an additional contrivance that played directly on the most fundamental of human emotions: love of family. Though they did it when they had to, the race examiners always frowned upon inspecting individuals without their kin present; only an evaluation of "all living clan members," they insisted, would guarantee that someone actually possessed the requisite "hereditary value."[46] Of course, this was impossible most of the time. Even if a family unit survived resettlement intact, which was by no means certain, they usually had relatives living elsewhere – many of whom had already been expelled to the General Government or fallen prey to the indiscriminate razzias of Nazi labor squads. One SD officer in Stuttgart enumerated the bitter consequences of this separation: "The attempt to settle into the new homeland is complicated for many Germanizables by the fact that they have relatives who are suffering in Poland." He referred to one woman who "lives in agony because she had to leave behind a sick child in Poland who has since died from tuberculosis," as well as a young man for whom "the fate of his parents and siblings, once rich farmers who were deported to Warsaw and now live a miserable existence, constitutes a severe emotional burden."[47] It is hardly surprising, then, that WED candidates flooded the Aussenstelle with letters inquiring about the whereabouts of loved ones and begging to be reunited with them. In March 1941, Schwalm warned that this state of affairs would soon sink the whole project: "The reports consistently show that Germanization almost always produces a negative result among those whose family remains in the eastern territories or the General Government. The communal spirit is incredibly strong among the Poles and it is only natural that the fate of the family weighs heavily on the individual." Schwalm did not

[44] USHMMA 15.021M/6/47/21: Harders to Dongus, March 30, 1944.
[45] Jill Stephenson, *Hitler's Home Front: Württemberg under the Nazis* (New York: Humbledon Continuum, 2006), 275, 285.
[46] BA NS 47/27/22-24: Hintze to Hofmann, Lorenz, Kaltenbrunner, and HSSPFs, February 2, 1943.
[47] StL K 110, Bü 48, Bd. 28-29: SD Stuttgart to SD Aussenstellen in Württemberg, September 1, 1941.

despair though, for he had already come up with a solution: "The remaining portion of the family, which is theoretically capable of Germanization, must also be settled in the Reich and Germanized in practice."[48]

The policy Schwalm outlined came to be known as *Heranholung*, or retrieval, which he had already taken the liberty of instituting earlier that year. On February 9, 1941, Dongus asked HSSPF Kaul to contact a group of fourteen WED candidates in Württemberg and find out the addresses of any relatives still living in the Warthegau. "The Aussenstelle will perform an examination of these persons," he added, "so that we can transfer them there."[49] The RKF Staff Main Office ratified this practice on March 18, and by August it also applied to family members in the Reich "who have not yet been included in the re-Germanization measures." Once again, the Stabshauptamt acted as a clearing house for incoming requests, which Stier collected from the regional HSSPFs and transmitted to either the RuSHA Race Office or the Aussenstelle, depending on whether the subjects resided in Germany or Poland.[50] In many cases, WED candidates set the gears in motion by writing to race examiners in Łódź (whom they knew personally) as opposed to filing a claim with the HSSPFs (whom they often did not). On March 8, 1941 Jozef Papier asked Schwalm to "retrieve" his sister Anna and their parents, who had been "mistakenly" deported to the General Government. Four days later, Schwalm directed the district governor in Chodzież to transport Anna to the Aussenstelle, and by April 2 she was in Habenshausen with her brother; on April 21, he arranged for the resettlement of Jozef's parents from Limanowa as well.[51] The Eignungsprüfer showed even more readiness to help young spouses and engaged couples, no doubt enticed by the prospect of facilitating the conception of "racially valuable offspring".[52]

It is easy to see how this process opened the door to exponential growth.[53] Soon enough, the race and resettlements experts were spending an inordinate amount of time tracking down family members and transferring them around to various workplaces, at which point the RKF stepped in to scale things back. As Fähndrich observed in August 1941, "For technical reasons, the large number of cases and the scattered locations make it very difficult to carry out the registration and racial examination of individual family members."[54] In March 1942, in light of "constant disruptions to wartime economic production," Stier limited the use of *Heranholung* to immediate relatives who were either essential to the family's livelihood or located in areas forbidden to re-Germanizable Poles. The RuSHA could still screen individuals who fell outside these parameters though, and they continued to do so (depending on where

[48] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/3-4: Schwalm to Koppe, March 8, 1941.
[49] USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/196-197: Dongus to Kaul, February 9, 1941.
[50] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/63: RKF Staff Main Office, "Liste von Anordnungen des RKFDV betr. das Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," unsigned, undated; USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/104-105: "Arbeitsgang bei der Wiedereindeutschung," unsigned, undated; BA R 49/73/62-63: Fähndrich to Hofmann, Schwalm, and HSSPFs, August 14, 1941.
[51] See Papier's letters to the Aussenstelle in USHMMA 15.021M/5/32.
[52] See the documents on these kinds of proceedings in USHMMA 15.021M/1/4/105-206.
[53] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/121-123: "Antrag auf Wiedereindeutschung," undated.
[54] BA R 49/73/62-63: Fähndrich to Hofmann, Schwalm, and HSSPFs, August 14, 1941.

the front lay) despite the logistical complications involved.[55] *Heranholung* was obviously not essentially humane in nature; it did not cater to the interests of WED candidates so much as it manipulated their longings to advance the overarching goal of biological renewal. But it clearly was a response to conditions on the ground, another facet of the nexus between state and non-state actors at center and periphery that propelled the Germanization campaign forward.

But none of these fresh streams of "lost German blood" sufficed to quench the Nazis' insatiable thirst for more, so they introduced another measure that made every coercive strategy they had relied on before look relatively tame by comparison. With so many German men away at the front, it was no secret that German women often cultivated intimate relationships with foreign laborers.[56] While the reality of sexual intercourse between German men and Polish women greatly vexed the Nazis, they generally did not punish transgressors all that harshly; when it came to liaisons between German women and Polish men, by contrast, they responded to "race defilement" with draconian violence, interning the former in a concentration camp and condemning the latter to death.[57] In the course of performing medical exams on the accused, however, Public Health officials noticed that many "exhibited a Nordic racial component." Concerned that this lethal deterrent might lead to an unintended loss of "valuable German blood," Himmler decreed on July 5, 1941 that "Polish civilian laborers and prisoners of war who have engaged in sexual relations with German women and girls… must be evaluated as to their capability for Germanization before the submission of a recommendation for special treatment." The Gestapo now had standing orders to get in touch with the responsible RuS-Führer after arresting the suspects; if the ensuing inspection produced an auspicious ruling, the man could enter the Re-Germanization Procedure, though not before enduring a brief stint in the KZ to "atone" for the "crime" of subverting ethno-sexual boundaries.[58] The race examiners then set out to "retrieve" the subject's relatives, traveling as far as Riga in this capacity and forging another link between the home front and the imperial fringe "so that the whole family could be examined and included in the Germanization process."[59]

The prosecution of these "special treatment cases" (*Sonderbehandlungsfälle*) became a frighteningly common feature of everyday life all over Germany and Austria ("special treatment" being the Nazis' favorite euphemism for judicial murder). Witold Przewodowski was among the relatively lucky ones. The Gestapo detained Witold in May 1942 after rumors surfaced that he had fornicated with a German housemaid in Ewattingen, though he RuS-Führer in Stuttgart concluded that he met the "racial

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[55] BA R 49/73/116-118: Stier to Heydrich, Hofmann, Dongus, Seldte, and HSSPFs, March 18, 1942.

[56] Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 234-235. Also see Birthe Kundrus, "Verbotener Umgang. Liebesbeziehungen zwischen Ausländer und Deutschen 1939-1945," in *Nationalsozialismus und Zwangsarbeit in der Region Oldenburg*, eds. Katharina Hoffmann and Andreas Lembeck (Oldenburg: Universität Oldenburg, 1999), 149-170.

[57] LOC/NMT, 1140, Doc. 1918-PS: Himmler, "Address to Party Leaders" (English transcript), September 7, 1940.

[58] See the preliminary investigation files of the Zentrale-Stelle Ludwigsburg in BAL B 162/2421/4-5.

[59] LOC/NMT, 691-692; ITS 1.2.2.1.341/11345908: Dongus to Bethge, February 2, 1943.

prerequisites for Germanizable ethnic aliens" due to his "reddish blond hair," "blue-grey eyes," "pronounced cheekbones," and "honest demeanor."[60] Feliks Przywara similarly escaped the harshest repercussions of his relationship with a German woman on account of his "slender, athletic physique," "wide oval skull formation," and "pointed chin."[61] Himmler himself occasionally interceded to save someone from the hangman's noose. After scanning through photographs of Jan Nowakowski in November 1942, HSSPF Kaltenbrunner in Vienna protested to Hofmann that the Eignungsprüfer had judged the man "too harshly." The RuSHA chief defended his subordinate by arguing that "It is always better to reject borderline cases and thereby set an example than to be too benevolent." Himmler vetoed the original verdict anyway and declared Nowakowski "capable of Germanization."[62]

Most people who stood under official scrutiny due to "forbidden sexual relations" were not so fortunate, as in the case of Stefan Kroll and Amalie Aumer in Kaiserslautern. In the fall of 1941, Stefan confessed to having maintained a long-term consensual affair with Amalie; she alleged that he had raped her repeatedly, though the police disregarded this accusation as a convenient lie. More critically for both of them, Stefan did not fulfill the stringent criteria of the RuSHA. Amalie subsequently disappeared into the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück. On April 17, 1942, the Gestapo hanged Stefan in the woods south of Schallodenbach as 155 of his countrymen looked on.[63] This was not an isolated incident. In Westphalia, Eduard Nizio's "yellowish, pallid skin" and "narrow, sloped head" made an "unfavorable impression" on the inspector who appraised him; HSSPF Gutenberger sentenced Eduard to death in June 1942.[64] According to another race examiner in the Rhineland, Franz Grzesiak was "deceitful and malicious and therefore unsuitable for the ethnic community"; on October 7, 1942, the Gestapo executed him outside the town of Ungstein.[65] Beyond illustrating the inane racism that characterized their deliberations, all of these examples indicate that, when it came to "special treatment cases," the Eignungsprüfer wielded direct power over life and death. Although the decision to enforce capital punishment technically rested with the HSSPFs and the Reich Security Main Office, only the RuSHA could grant the amnesty bestowed on those who entered the Re-Germanization Procedure.[66] With that

[60] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345492: Thomsen to Bethge, August 22, 1942; ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345494: Andrae to Kaul, May 30, 1943.

[61] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345506-507: Bethge to Waldeck, February 23, 1943; ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345505: Schultz to SD Kassel, September 28, 1942.

[62] BA NS 2/82/61: Kaltenbrunner to Hofmann, November 25, 1942; BA NS 2/82/58: Hofmann to Kaltenbrunner, December 14, 1942.

[63] See the proceedings on this case in BAL B 162/2425.

[64] BAL B 162/2435/84: Karasek to Gestapo Krefeld, November 22, 1941; BAL B 162/2435/114: Gutenberger to Gestapo Düsseldorf, June 24, 1942.

[65] BAL B 162/2425/59: Steinbeck to Gestapo Neustadt, July 23, 1942. Also see a memorandum dated February 26, 1965 from Assessor Hoffmann of the Zentrale-Stelle Ludwigsburg in BAL B 162/2425/105.

[66] LOC/NMT, 691-692.

being said, if not for the information that ordinary civilians so readily divulged about their neighbors, the Gestapo never would have found out about these relationships in the first place.[67]

Himmler's acolytes did not stop there either. In 1942, they reformulated the definition of "special treatment cases" to encompass female offenders, then widened the circle of targets to cover additional ethnic groups – Slovenes, Czechs, Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians, Belarusians, and Serbs – enlarging the WED with people from almost every Slavic nation represented among the masses of foreign laborers in Germany.[68] As of March, those who violated this system of sexual apartheid also had to consent to marry one another, especially if their dalliance had resulted in pregnancy, with SS functionaries acting as match-makers in a macabre engagement ritual that essentially forced people to profess or feign mutual devotion under threat of life and limb.[69] The male partners still faced a spell in "protective custody" designed to weed out "racially flawless yet behaviorally unsuitable or anti-German persons," though now they did their time in a special segregated ward within the concentration camp at Hinzert – the same place where the Gestapo confined anti-Nazi dissidents from Luxembourg and members of the French Foreign Legion. If commandant Paul Sporrenberg affirmed that these so-called "E-Poles" had shown "good behavior" over a trial period of six months, and if the SD concurred, then the Stabshauptamt authorized their release, the Ministry of Justice issued a pardon, and the HSSPFs registered them for the WED.[70] So, for instance, Sporrenberg notified Harro Thomsen at the Reich Security Main Office on June 17, 1943 that one Jan Plywacz had "given no cause for complaint during his time in the camp"; although at first his work ethic did not conform to expectations, Jan had quickly fallen in line after an "admonishment" and therefore deserved "to be regarded as suitable for Germanization."[71] On July 7, Thomsen forwarded this report to the RKF, where Bethge arranged for Jan's subsequent employment in a private firm.[72] In conjunction with the HSSPFs, Bethge also took care of the necessary formalities so that the preordained marriages could be consecrated shortly after the subject was discharged from Hinzert.[73] Many of these "E-Poles" never got out at all. Although they enjoyed reasonably better treatment than other prisoners, some died of disease and malnourishment before their

[67] Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158-159.

[68] ITS 1.2.2.1.341/11345825: Bethge to Oberstadt, July 26, 1944; ITS 2.2.0.1.179/82331211-213: Müller to Greifelt, June 13, 1942; ITS 2.2.0.1.179/82331080-86: Gestapo Frankfurt, "Vermerk betr. Behandlung der im Reich eingesetzten ausländischen Arbeitskräfte und Kriegsgefangenen," unsigned, February 15, 1943. Although the Gestapo discouraged sexual relations between Germans and migrant workers in general, there was no legal basis for enacting punitive measures against partners who hailed from Western Europe or from other Axis countries.

[69] LOC/NMT, 1140-1145, Doc. NO-1365: Kaltenbrunner, "Circular on Special Treatment Cases" (English transcript), March 13, 1944. Also see Hamann, "Erwünscht und Unerwünscht," 162-163.

[70] LOC/NMT, 1150-1151, Doc. NO-3271: Hämmerlein to Hildebrandt, May 1944; HStD G 24, Nr. 1528, Bd. 1: Oberstaatsanwalt Darmstadt to Generalstaatsanwalt Darmstadt, November 9, 1942. Also see Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, eds., *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager; Band 5: Hinzert, Auschwitz, Neuengamme* (Frankfurt am Main: Beck, 2005), 23-25.

[71] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345418: Sporrenberg to Thomsen, June 17, 1943.

[72] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345417: Thomsen to Bethge, July 7, 1943.

[73] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345324: Bethge to Ebrecht, August 5, 1943.

probation elapsed.[74] If they did not "prove themselves" during this time, moreover, the Gestapo relegated them to indefinite detention in one of the larger and more murderous concentration camps.[75]

Perhaps more than any other aspect of the WED, "special treatment cases" generated a great deal of backlash at the grassroots level. While Catholic Germans often objected specifically to the public hanging of their Polish co-religionists, most citizens were plain baffled by the workings of a judicial machinery that left German women to raise illegitimate children alone after the police had executed or imprisoned the father, whereas those who coupled with "racially valuable" foreigners would not have to bear the burdens of a single mother and seemed to get off scot-free. Others demanded that these women face stiffer penalties, regardless of whether the SS approved of their paramours – leaving little doubt about what they thought of the latter. As one Gestapo officer observed, "Reflections that the woman is German-blooded, and as such ought to be handled more mildly, are foreign to the population." On the other end of the spectrum, some civilians and Party functionaries expressed disappointment when the RuSHA rejected individuals whom they believed to be "capable of Germanization."[76] The Eignungsprüfer ignored these criticisms and stuck to their guns; although it never translated into complacency, they had more than enough reason to feel gratified. Despite the obviously unsympathetic reaction the WED provoked among broad swathes of the German populace, and despite the consequently restive and sometimes openly defiant mood of the candidates themselves, the race and resettlement experts of the SS could still rest assured that the program was on the right track – a delusional presumption, but not entirely unfounded. If re-Germanization had been nothing but a nightmare for everyone who took part, then no-one else would have joined. And yet the applications continued to roll in long after decisive reversals in German military fortunes, even when many foreign laborers must have realized that membership in the WED was not always the blessing the Nazis promised.

With that being said, for all the smug certitude of the race examiners, there were clearly problems within their own shop which could not be easily side-stepped. Already in the spring of 1943, Himmler had begun to lose patience with the RuSHA. In March of that year, he removed Hofmann from his post as agency chief, citing an "alarming impression of unacceptable inconsistency" in the work of his underlings as well as their inability to keep pace with the "great tasks" at hand.[77] These two failings were cyclically related: as the Wehrmacht drafted more and more personnel for active duty, there simply were not enough inspectors left to handle Himmler's enormous demands (HSSPF Rösener had already lamented this shortage back in August 1942).[78] Those who remained were heavily overburdened, and sometimes they

[74] ITS 1.2.2.1.341/11345654: Oberstadt to Bethge, June 19, 1944.
[75] See the memorandum of the Zentrale-Stelle Ludwigsburg in BAL B 162/2423/631. Also see ITS 1.2.2.1.341/11345674: Thomsen to Bethge, August 20, 1943.
[76] Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 237, 243-244.
[77] The letter from Himmler to Hofmann dates from March 1943 and can be found in BDC SSO/111A.
[78] BA NS 2/81/48-50: Rösener to Hofmann, August 8, 1942.

tried to cut corners or play fast and loose with the rules. One Eignungsprüfer in Lower Silesia confessed earlier the same year that, with so few men available, "the numerous Germanization investigations are obviously conducted as quickly possible."[79] The insufficient training of replacements, some of them women, likewise produced jarring discrepancies out of what was supposed to be a uniform methodology.[80] At the Race Office in Berlin, Schultz started to notice major deviations in the statistics and worried that "hereditary and racial-biological viewpoints are no longer accorded sole decisive authority." "There exists the danger," he warned, "that one inspector pits himself against another and ultimately renders the work of the Aussenstelle – indeed, the entire program of racial selection for the Re-Germanization Procedure – both contradictory and untrustworthy."[81] The charges leveled against Helmut Sewering in early 1943 showcase what Schultz was talking about. Beyond rebuking Sewering for having filled out race cards improperly, superiors disparaged the findings of one service trip where he graded thirty foreign laborers with the formula 8aAI ("superbly built physique, pure Nordic, very suitable"), for "such an extraordinary frequency of such cases in the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial region" had to be "the result of a misdiagnosis." They even insinuated that Sewering harbored misguided sympathy for the Poles, accusing him of being "far too mild" in his judgment of "special treatment cases."[82]

Incitements to increased severity from on high amplified the inherent power imbalance of racial selection and intensified social distancing between examiner and examinee, encouraging the Eignungsprüfer to look upon their subjects as anonymous "specimens" at best, inferior "subhumans" at worst. The effects of this trend are transparent in the mounting frequency of decidedly pejorative rulings that vilified foreign workers as "stupid and intellectually limited," as "mongrels with predominantly deficient Eastern traits," as "beasts" who ought to be "exterminated."[83] Such derogatory utterances no doubt articulated the frustration many inspectors felt when prized candidates failed to live up to their expected "potential," which in turn tapped into a gnawing suspicion that they may have been outsmarted and manipulated by people who possessed no "biological value" whatsoever – a subconscious recognition, perhaps, that very little actually distinguished German from non-German. At any rate, by September 1943 the spiteful demeanor of some RuSHA officials had grown so toxic that upper management had to try to rein it in. A memorandum penned that month by Richard Hildebrandt (Hofmann's successor) stressed the importance of displaying "politeness and respect for the singularities of foreign nations" so that "the non-German population is neither pushed away nor offended." Hildebrandt forbid "anything that might be construed as arbitrary or an abuse of state power," reminding

[79] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/46: Schröter to Klinger, May 5, 1942.
[80] BA NS 2/81/51-52: Hofmann to Waldeck, August 28, 1942; BA NS 2/89/58: Hofmann to Schultz, September 24, 1942.
[81] BA NS 2/22/47-48: Schultz, "Auszugsweiser Bericht über rassische Überprüfungen," August 6, 1942.
[82] Hamann, "Erwünscht und Unerwünscht," 156-158.
[83] See the collection of RuSHA examination results in USHMMA 15.021M/5/36.

his subordinates that "despotism and illegality are not only unworthy of Germans, but would jeopardize our leadership of non-German populations" and "subvert the consolidation of the pan-European idea."[84]

These statements sound truly remarkable (and more than a bit hypocritical) coming from a man who had sentenced thousands of Poles to death during his tenure as the HSSPF of Danzig-West Prussia and helped deport local Jews to the extermination facility at Chełmno. But they did not differ all that much in tone or content from the way many Nazi ideologues conceptualized the role of "racially valuable ethnic aliens" within the New Order. "What are we to do with these 70 million people?" asked Hans Ehlich in a speech to Nazi youth leaders in December 1942. Expulsion was one answer, extermination another. Yet given that the Germans had "served as cultural fertilizer for numerous other nations," it was just as crucial to construct "a clear racial and ethnic inventory of these nations" so as to "select certain segments of the population and subject them to ethnomorphosis." The approach Ehlich envisaged would succeed not by recycling outmoded (colonial) policies of assimilation or treating foreigners as "negro slaves," but by retaining "only those elements that are racially the same as the German people" and ensuring that "the proper relationships" of "cohabitation" existed between the former and the latter.[85]

This is exactly what the RuSHA had already been doing within Germany and outside of it for some time, and in March 1942 they received a conceptual device with which to enhance their efforts when Himmler announced a change to the Nazis' racial taxonomy with Ordinance 70/I. The term "kindred blood" (*artverwandtes Blut*) had originally denoted "the blood of all peoples who have settled in Europe… that is, Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Portuguese, and so forth, in addition to the Germanic peoples." The growing quantity of foreign laborers in the Reich, however, demanded a revision of this standard, for it had been "built on the false preconception that the racial structure of all European peoples is so closely related to that of the Germans that there would be no danger of racial deterioration through interbreeding." The RKF and the Party Chancellery, therefore, worked out a new hierarchy that divided Europeans into "Germanic" (or "tribally related") and "non-Germanic" nations. At first glance, the purpose of this redefinition seems to have been wholly exclusionary. Himmler himself described the objective as a "clear demarcation of non-Germanic ethnicities, above all the Slavs living within our settlement area" so as to "prevent all forms of blood mixing" ("racial aliens," namely Jews, were not included in either group to begin with). But the *first* priority of Ordinance 70/I entailed codifying the "special status of the Germanic peoples" – which also comprised "all Germanizable individuals or families from the non-Germanic peoples who possess a predominant share of Nordic racial elements" – in order to "bind them spiritually to our imperium and biologically to a collective gene pool." The

[84] BA R 69/966/3: Hildebrandt to RuS-Führer and Eignungsprüfer, September 1, 1943.

[85] Ehlich, "Die Behandlung des fremden Volkstums," December 10, 1942, in *"Generalplan Ost". Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, eds. Mechtild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher, and Cordula Tollmien (Berlin: Akadamie, 1993), 48-52.

"excavation" and "reclamation of submerged Teutonic or German blood" would now embrace civilians from almost every country under Nazi rule, whose Germanization would proceed "in the same way as [it] is currently being done through my Staff Main Office and Race and Settlement Main Office" – that is, through the WED.[86] This was no mere theoretical schema either; one Gestapo circular dated February 15, 1943 spelled out the practical implications for millions of foreign nationals living in the Reich. The author specified that, in the interest of "winning them over to the idea of the Greater Germanic Reich and the unity of all Germanic peoples," the police must treat Volksdeutsche and re-Germanizables, along with itinerant Flemings, Danes, Norwegians, and Dutch, as full-fledged German "ethnic comrades." Yet in addition, he also ordered that migrant workers from allied or neutral countries (Italy, Sweden, Slovakia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain, and France) "must be made to understand through sympathetic and equitable treatment that they are members of the new Europe," not just out of foreign policy considerations, but because they too might share "blood ties" with the Germans.[87]

Much like Ehlich's speech, each of these documents once again allows us to grasp the reciprocal interaction that linked military conquest, economic mobilization, and demographic growth. As German armies marched farther and farther away from the homeland, the centripetal influx of non-Germans swelled accordingly and the greater the tendency became to think of the war as an event that had caused "the common roots of the European family of peoples to come to the surface" by illuminating "racial relationships based upon the ancient Germanic settlement of the land between the Baltic and Black Seas, extending to the Atlantic Ocean and North Africa."[88] The myth of "lost German blood" had always implied an almost limitless geographical scope; anywhere "Germanic peoples" had set foot in the past could conceivably fall within the orbit of Himmler's system. Ironically, nowhere was this reach more evident than on the home front. It was here that "bearers of lost German blood" were brought to undergo "re-education," here that the doors of entry into the *Volksgemeinschaft* were opened to people from almost every corner of the European landmass. In this way, the Nazis transformed towns and villages across Germany and Austria into nascent microcosms of a supranational society structured around concepts of race, even if the choice to integrate potential entrants ultimately rested with the denizens of said communities. And for all the problems and confusion it generated – Hofmann's ouster was an obvious sign that things were not going so swimmingly – the participation of ordinary civilians in the

[86] BA NS 19/3680/7: Himmler, "Anordnung 70/I," March 23, 1942.

[87] ITS 2.2.0.1.179/82331080-1086: "Vermerk betr. Behandlung der im Reich eingesetzten ausländischen Arbeitskräfte und Kriegsgefangenen," unsigned, February 15, 1943. The impact of Ordinance 70/I was also evident in the guidelines issued by the Interior Ministry that same month regarding educational policy vis-à-vis the children of foreign workers in Germany. Whereas "tribally related youths" were permitted to attend the Volksschulen, all others were excluded; the latter only received basic German language instruction in separate institutions, see Hans-Christian Harten, *De-Kulturation und Germanisierung. Die nationalsozialistische Rassen- und Erziehungspolitik in Polen 1939-1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1996), 290-291.

[88] Quoted from John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 15.

domestic project of racial classification supplied the Germanization campaign with a vital stimulus that radiated outward as the frontiers of the Nazi empire expanded and contracted during the later years of the Second World War.

In Poland, the country where the "hunt for good blood" began, the ramifications of this dynamic did not take long to materialize. The introduction of the Deutsche Volksliste in the spring of 1941, as we saw in Chapter Five, was a logical extension of the Re-Germanization Procedure. Naturally enough, the managers of the WED itself also endeavored to build upon previous accomplishments and take the program to grandiose new heights. As rumors of massive expulsions to the Arctic and Siberia leaked out in the late summer of that year, the chief of the UWZ in Poznań, Rolf-Heinz Höppner, submitted a fifteen-page memorandum to Ehlich on the tasks he anticipated his agency would assume in the coming months: "After the conclusion of the war [against the Soviet Union], the undesirable sections of the population in the territories annexed to Germany must be resettled. This concerns not only the final solution to the Jewish Question… but rather above all the deportation of those members of the eastern and southeastern peoples who are racially incapable of re-Germanization." Although he acknowledged that concrete organizational discussions would be impractical with the outcome of Operation Barbarossa still hanging in the balance, Höppner's forecast nevertheless tallied quite closely with sketches then being drawn up by the architects of the Generalplan Ost (Ehlich himself, and Konrad Meyer at the RKF Staff Main Office). Yet before these men could even presume to divine how many people might eventually come into question for Germanization, they first needed to establish some sort of preliminary benchmark with which to gauge the overall proportion of "racially desirable" inhabitants in the "new German settlement space." To this end, Höppner and HSSPF Wilhelm Koppe suggested that the RuSHA conduct a "sample survey" (*Probeerfassung*) in select districts of the Warthegau – something that Schwalm had been advocating since late 1940 in conjunction with Höppner's counterpart in Łódź, Hermann Krumey.[89]

This project commenced on January 19, 1942. Working in cooperation with representatives of the NSDAP and the civil administration, six mobile UWZ units outfitted with one Eignungsprüfer apiece screened 44,782 people in the counties of Wolsztyn, Środa, and Łódź within the brief span of forty-five days (an average of 974 people per day). They judged a sizeable majority of the examinees, 33,897 persons (75.7 percent), to be "only significant with respect to labor deployment" (RuS-III), while 3,488 (7.7 percent) represented an "undesirable infusion" of "non-European blood" (RuS-IV or IVf) and 4,257 (9.5 percent) fell under the rubric of "asocials." The inspectors also categorized 3,140 persons (7.1 percent) as "capable of re-Germanization" (RuS-I or II) – less than the initial projection of one-tenth, but more than twice the quotient of "racially valuable" Poles approved thus far by the Aussenstelle (2-3

[89] BAL B 162/339/63-79: Höppner to Ehlich and Eichmann, September 2, 1941; Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1998), 218-219, 243-246.

percent).[90] The impact of the "sample survey" can be measured in several ways. It provided a veritable goldmine of statistical data for Ehlich and Meyer to draw upon while composing their outlines for ethnic cleansing, colonization, and cultural genocide in Eastern Europe (although their estimates for how many individuals would be "capable of re-Germanization" were actually much higher). According to one June 1943 think piece, possibly authored by Walter Dongus at the RuSHA Aussenstelle, the findings of the race examiners had helped set the stage for "an expansive solution to the Slav Question" by creating a model that could be transposed "to other Slavic peoples" – one in which natives with a "sufficient Nordic blood component" would be "accepted into the Re-Germanization Procedure without reservation… removed from the settlement zone, and brought to the Old Reich."[91] The "sample survey" had more direct consequences as well: it convinced the Eignungsprüfer to augment the "hunt for good blood" in western Poland and gather new recruits for the WED through practically every conceivable means available to them. Krumey predicted in the aftermath of the investigations that some five hundred thousand Poles would enter the Re-Germanization Procedure over the next few years. Surely there were rich pockets of "valuable genetic material" hidden elsewhere in the eastern provinces, he mused; one merely had to "unearth" them.[92]

During the second half of the year 1942, the acquisition of re-Germanizables in the incorporated eastern territories reached its apex, embracing roughly nine thousand people between June and December alone.[93] No longer satisfied with just having prospects delivered to them by the UWZ, Dongus and his assistants started going out and looking for them on their own. In fact, they were so aggressive in tracking down and commandeering "racially valuable" subjects that they soon provoked the ire of regional administrators. In July 1942, the head of the Agricultural Labor Office in Poznań complained to Hofmann that personnel from the Aussenstelle had removed young Ursula Zaremba from her employer's household without notice and transferred her to Germany, even though "the deployment of Germans as replacements for withdrawn Polish laborers is not possible." Such unauthorized actions, he pointed out, had "seriously disrupted the labor supply system"; Dongus countered by insisting that "labor -related objections must be

[90] BA R 75/7/9-11: Harders, "Bericht über die Probeerassung im Kreis Wollstein," March 7, 1942; BA R 75/9/1-17: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Rahmen des erweiterten 3. Nahplanes," December 31, 1942.

[91] "Vermerk über die Problem von Fremdvölkischen Nationalitäten im Europa," unsigned, June 15, 1943, in *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS: zbiór dokumentów polskich i niemieckich z okresu okupajci hitlerowskiej*, eds. Czesław Madajczyk and Franciszek Cieślak (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1977), Doc. 281.

[92] BA R 75/7/12-36: Krumey, "Vorläufiger Abschlussbericht über die Probeerfassung der polnischen Bevölkerung im Warthegau," undated. He seems to have assumed that this number would consist mostly of people from Group 3 of DVL. Michael Esch suggests that it was the success of the "sample survey" that convinced Greiser to permit the RuSHA to screen registrants in Group 4 as well as undecided cases; see Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 244-245.

[93] BA R 59/46/35-37: Greifelt, "Strafmassnahmen und Herausnahme aus dem Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," June 22, 1942; BA R 59/46/47-48: Greifelt to Kaltenbrunner, Hofmann, Dongus, and HSSPFs, December 12, 1942. Greifelt counted 17,000 in June, though in December he gave a figure of 26,000.

placed in the background."[94] By August, these requisitions had gotten so out of hand that even some of the Eignungsprüfer felt compelled to urge restraint. The RuS-Führer in Danzig-West Prussia, Franz Vietz, cited a "catastrophic agricultural labor situation" as well as "continuous and bitter altercations with local authorities" in support of his proposal to limit the resettlement of "Germanizable ethnic Poles" to those whom examiners working with the UWZ turned up in the course of ongoing "displacements."[95] Hofmann was not entirely insensitive to these concerns; at the very least, he could appreciate the wisdom of compromise on a strategic level, for many civil servants in western Poland had gone out of their way to make it unnecessarily hard for RuSHA agents to operate within their districts. Hofmann therefore promised in September that from now on the race examiners would wait for enterprises to hire replacements before exacting their quarry, so long as labor officials in exchange agreed to "acknowledge our desires to the utmost extent," "do everything possible to procure a substitute as quickly as possible," and "make use of this restriction only in truly problematic cases." A halt to the independent scouting of WED candidates, however, was out of the question: "In no way do I consider it necessary to discontinue the rendition of Germanizables for the Old Reich."[96]

Subsequent events reveal that Hofmann either could not control his subordinates or merely feigned retreat by proffering good faith in word rather than deed. The Eignungsprüfer continued to scour the Polish countryside with the same relentlessness well into the following years, searching for "lost German blood" and taking it wherever they could, sometimes by deceiving provincial bureaucrats who stood in their way. Creutz informed Himmler in March 1943 that the Gauleiter had lodged renewed protests after formal bans on the "rendition" of Polish workers failed to keep the RuSHA in check.[97] The Landrat of Olkusz reported in June that their indiscretions had not only unleashed economic chaos in Upper Silesia, but stirred up political unrest to boot. When the RKF branch office in Katowice summoned 228 residents for a racial examination, the subjects assumed that it portended "evacuation, arrest, and shipment to a concentration camp"; upon learning that it actually concerned "Germanization measures," they "grew even more agitated." According to the Landrat, episodes like this quickly became public knowledge and thus created "fertile soil for the resistance movement," yet all his attempts to suspend the practice came to naught.[98] Disgruntled administrators in the Warthegau did not give up without a fight

[94] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 291. These disputes actually dated back to 1941. Greiser's trustee for labor complained to Schwalm about a similar incident in July of that year, and Creutz reported in February 1942 that officials in Danzig-West Prussia had raised "emphatic protests" against unilateral requisitions of Polish workers. Only in the summer of 1942, however, did they begin to take place on a massive scale; see USHMMA 15.021M/6/42/10: Kendzia to Schwalm, July 14, 1941; LOC/NMT, 787-789, Doc. NO-2267: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), February 20, 1942.

[95] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/127: Vietz to Hofmann, August 1, 1942.

[96] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/63-65: Hofmann to Greifelt, September 3, 1942.

[97] BA NS 19/1780/20-27: Creutz, "Bericht über das Verfahren zur Wiedereindeutschung von rassisch wertvollen Personen," March 25, 1943.

[98] Gerhard Wolf, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität. Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012), 446-447.

either; in the fall of 1943, they conspired to put an end to the activity of the Eignungsprüfer once and for all by depriving them of fuel for their vehicles. This tactic also proved unsuccessful once Himmler stepped in and ordered the SD to allot them gasoline from its own stores instead.[99] Around the same time, Vietz observed that "The rendition of Germanizable families continues to impose an enormous burden on already strained labor conditions, which has given everyone here the impression that this issue holds no real importance for the SS Race and Settlement Main Office."[100]

In truth, this was something of an unfair criticism. Vietz and his colleagues were not oblivious to wartime economic exigencies; they simply chose to prioritize demands for manpower in Germany because it enabled them to advance their agenda, or as one RKF directive put it, "the transfer of Germanizable laborers to the Old Reich takes precedence over labor deployment in the East."[101] This explains why Greifelt and Fähndrich went to such great lengths to market WED candidates to German employers, and why they redoubled their efforts in 1943 and 1944.[102] For his part, Dongus maintained that the Re-Germanization Procedure had always performed a "dual service": "On the one hand, the agricultural community looks upon these laborers as a highly valued asset; on the other hand, for biological reasons the program must be carried out further in order to supply valuable blood to the Old Reich."[103] Beyond succinctly capturing the integral relationship between popular opinion at home and racial consolidation abroad, this quote illustrates another signature aspect of National Socialist Germanization policy. Historians have often argued that the Nazis manipulated the tenets of their own ideology to justify the assimilation of non-German populations they needed to retain as a docile workforce. Actually, it was the other way around: the SS took advantage of the labor shortage in Germany as a pretext to pursue ideological objectives in the occupied territories. Equally as important, public willingness to engage with these endeavors did not just emanate from grateful German citizens in the Reich; Himmler's race and resettlement experts could claim the moral high ground over their opponents because so many foreigners themselves volunteered to be "rescued." During one week in March 1942, for instance, three separate families showed up at the headquarters of a RuSHA "registration commando" in Kalisz and asked to be considered for the Re-Germanization Procedure; the captain of the unit immediately examined each family and passed on the resulting documentation to the Aussenstelle.[104] The following month, Vietz notified Hofmann and Dongus that so many Poles had applied to join the

[99] USHMMA 15.021M/6/41/46: Himmler to Harders and Ehlich, November 21, 1943.
[100] BA NS 47/38: Vietz to Harders, October 21, 1943.
[101] USHMMA 15.007/10/125/63-65: Hofmann to Greifelt, September 3, 1942.
[102] Robert L. Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy; A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germandom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 182.
[103] Isabel Heinemann, "Priviligierung und Gewalt. Polnische 'Wiedereindeutschungsfähige' in der nationalsozialistischen Umsiedlungspolitik," in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen Böhler and Stephan Lehnstaedt (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2012), 274.
[104] USHMMA 15.021M/2/12/145: RuSHA Erfassungskommando III, "Abschlussbericht für den Bezirk Kalisch-Stadt," sig. illegible, March 25, 1942.

WED in the county of Świecie that the Landrat was refusing to relinquish them out of fear that local agricultural production would cease almost entirely.[105] Over the course of a single two-day period in January 1944, the Aussenstelle took in requests for re-Germanization from no less than eighteen families, nearly all of whom had been denied entry into the Volksliste.[106]

By that point, however, the locus of SS resettlement activity in occupied Poland had long since shifted farther to the east, to the largely uncharted domains of the General Government. The Nazi viceroy in charge of this region, Hans Frank, was hardly a stranger to the myth of "lost German blood." He once told members of his staff in 1940 that he hoped to locate "racial kernels of Germandom" hidden among the indigenous Slavic masses and "reclaim" them for the *Volk*: "I speak openly of Germanization… How often have we seen with astonishment some blond, blue-eyed child speaking Polish? To which I say: 'If we were to teach this child German, she would be a pretty German girl."[107] Anthropologists at the Institute for German Eastern Work in Kraców likewise postulated that the surrounding countryside contained large quantities of "Nordic or related blood," the remnants of an aristocracy that had supposedly migrated to the Vistula valley in prehistoric times. [108] Himmler's acolytes also had far-reaching designs on the inhabitants of the General Government. As early as October 1939, RuSHA operatives advocated a comprehensive program of classification after coming across significant numbers of "racially superior types" in Western Galicia.[109] At the RKF Staff Main Office, Greifelt and Fähndrich were particularly captivated by the idea of "extracting" residents of the so-called Szwedy villages outside Kraków, whose lineage they traced back to Swedish colonists from the early eighteenth century.[110] Be that as it may, no one man did more to encourage the "recovery" of "German blood-bearers" in eastern Poland than Odilo Globocnik, the Austrian SS- and Police Leader responsible for the district of Lublin.

Venal, vainglorious, and thuggish even by SS standards, Globocnik was also a romantic dreamer whose visions of "racially pure German colonies in the East" were just as radical as those of his patron, Heinrich Himmler.[111] Already in November 1940, he announced a campaign to "rediscover" alleged "persons of German descent" in Polish-speaking villages that lay within his fiefdom; early the following year, teams made up of Nazi Party activists and ethnologists from the VoMi fanned out across Lublin and

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[105] USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/38: Vietz to Hofmann and Dongus, April 8, 1942.

[106] See the applications the Aussenstelle sent the Landrat of Mogilno on January 13-14, 1944 in USHMMA 15.021M/2/11/1-18.

[107] Quoted from Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 193.

[108] Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 122-123.

[109] BA NS 2/44/123-126: Brehm to Gottberg, October 21, 1939.

[110] Greifelt to Seldte, November 9, 1940, in *Der Menschenseinsatz. Grundsätze, Anordnungen und Richtlinien* (Berlin: Hauptabteilung des RKFDV, 1940), 57-59; BDC SSO/194: Fähndrich, "Die politischen Aufgaben der Umsiedler im Reich," September 28, 1941.

[111] For background information on his life and career, see Joseph Poprzeczny, *Odilo Globocnik: Hitler's Man in the East* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 9-60.

began to categorize the population with special "racial questionnaires."[112] Not surprisingly, they found exactly what they were looking for. A subsequent report asserted that many people in Zamość county descended from German colonists whom Austrian Emperor Joseph II brought in from Alsace-Lorraine and the Palatinate in 1784; over the course of the nineteenth century, these communities experienced a period of "de-Germanization" that gradually effaced German customs and architecture, leading in some locales to the "extinction" of the German language. While conceding that none of the villages he visited were "purely German," the author nevertheless avowed that "German blood could be verified in nearly all of [them]," which he felt obligated the regime to "support a dissimilation process with all means in order to awaken and nurture the peasants' consciousness of their origins and lead them back to the German people."[113] These sorts of observations and conclusions soon echoed throughout the SS power structure. Greifelt praised Globocnik's undertaking for having laid the "psychological groundwork for a future resettlement to the Old Reich, that is, for re-Germanization."[114] As it turned out, extending the reach of the WED into the General Government was only one facet of Globocnik's masterplan – a platform of wholesale expulsions and internal colonization designed to erect a "wall against Slavdom" and "crush the remaining Poles economically and biologically."[115] Like so many other Nazi functionaries posted abroad, Globocnik validated his brutal approach to *Volkstumspolitik* by citing the "mistakes" of earlier German governments, in this case the Habsburg Empire: "The ethnic policy of Austria completely unraveled due to its mild treatment of ethnic aliens… This tradition is no longer applicable in our current circumstances… Within the General Government, population policy is based on the recognition that this space is a German inland and must therefore be 100% German."[116]

Globocnik had to wait a long time before he could implement his grandiose schemes. During the first several years of the Second World War, Hitler and his confidants viewed the General Government primarily as a vast "dumping ground" for "undesirables" from the incorporated eastern territories (much to Frank's chagrin); they had no intention of assimilating the non-German population or settling the region with German colonists, which is why the SS relocated some thirty thousand self-identifying Volksdeutsche *from* Lublin to the Warthegau in 1940.[117] All of that changed with the decision to invade the Soviet Union. In March 1941, Frank announced that the General Government would be fully Germanized within a span of fifteen to twenty years – an aspiration that entailed the ejection of all Jews,

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[112] Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 235-238.

[113] NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942.

[114] Greifelt to Seldte, November 9, 1940, in *Der Menschenheinsatz*, 57-59.

[115] LOC/NMT, 864-866, Doc. NO-5875: Müller to Hofmann (English transcript), October 15, 1941.

[116] Globocnik, "Denkschrift zur Behandlung Fremdvölkischer," March 15, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 233.

[117] BA R 69/925/1-2: Himmler, "Anordnung 18/II," May 9, 1940; Andreas Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1939-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 192.

Poles, and Ukrainians.[118] Globocnik now had an opening, and the Reichsführer-SS quickly adopted his mission. On July 20, 1941, he traveled to Lublin and ordered the SSPF to construct a "large-scale settlement zone" in the vicinity of Zamość and step up his previous registration efforts – now designated in official correspondence as the *Fahndung nach deutschem Blut*, the "search for German blood."[119]

Technical arrangements for an immense resettlement initiative ensued shortly thereafter. In October 1941, the RuSHA set up an outpost in Lublin; Hofmann and Schultz toured the district a short time later.[120] The following month, Globocnik's police forces carried out an "experimental evacuation" of around two thousand Polish-speaking villagers from seven hamlets north of Zamość city, which were then re-populated by 105 ethnic German families from Radom.[121] After that, however, preparations got bogged down in what one RuSHA employee on the scene referred to as "the red tape of moribund government agencies." Globocnik could not actually enforce his writ without the cooperation of provincial administrators (Frank appointees), many of whom raised serious doubts about the feasibility of his proposed venture.[122] Wary of growing SS influence within his domain, Frank himself betrayed a schizophrenic and ambivalent attitude toward Himmler's Germanization drive. Although he retroactively sanctioned Globocnik's "search for German blood" in October 1941 and expanded it to the entire General Government, he initially entrusted the task of registration to his own subordinates, not to the SS. And while he was no less enraptured by fantasies of a "German East" than any other Nazi satrap, he remained acutely aware of the need to minimize popular discontent and ensure the smooth functioning of the economy.[123] It took until the late summer of 1942 for Himmler to break the deadlock and overcome Frank's reservations, after Hitler authorized the colonization of Lublin earlier that spring.[124] The timing of this pronouncement is crucial, for it coincided with the onset of *Aktion Reinhard* – the codename for the extermination of Polish Jews living in precisely the same area (which Globocnik also managed).

Meanwhile, in an atmosphere of euphoria brought on by renewed military victories in the Soviet Union, the outstanding pieces of the SS resettlement apparatus gradually fell into place as concrete

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[118] Thomas Sandkühler, *Endlösung in Galizien. Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz 1941-1944* (Berlin: Dietz, 1996), 89.

[119] NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942.

[120] BA NS 2/116/60: Hofmann to Frank, October 3, 1941; LOC/NMT, 864-866, Doc. NO-5875: Müller to Hofmann (English transcript), October 15, 1941; USHMMA 15.021M/6/46/5: Thole to Hofmann, February 28, 1942.

[121] Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940-1941* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1993), 133-134.

[122] LOC/NMT, 864-866, Doc. NO-5875: Müller to Hofmann (English transcript), October 15, 1941.

[123] Frank, "Verordnung über die Einführung eines Ausweises für Deutschstämmige im Generalgouvernement," October 28, 1941, in Pospieszalski, *Documenta Occupationis Teutonicae, vol. VI*, 186. Also see Martin Winstone, *The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe: Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 191.

[124] Hitler approved Himmler's proposal on April 5, 1942. The Reichsführer-SS had also unveiled far-reaching plans at a two-day meeting in Kraków the previous month, though Frank remained noncommittal. He must have changed his mind at some point during the following months, for on August 4 he consented to the operation – so long as it did not cause any economic or political disturbances; see Peter Witte et al., eds., *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/1942* (Hamburg: Christians, 1999), 391-392, 493-496; Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), 473, 504-505.

objectives gained further precision.[125] The RKF founded a branch office in Lublin at some point in June 1942, and Stier embarked on a "reconnaissance trip" through the district on July 14.[126] Around the same time, Creutz suggested to Himmler that future measures in Lublin would enable the release of more than ten thousand ethnic German Umsiedler from the VoMi camps in western Poland.[127] Over the next few months, in the course of several discussions between Himmler and Globocnik, the projected number of colonists rose to 98,300 people – a "conglomeration of pioneers" from nearly every country in occupied Europe (including re-Germanizables from Slovenia, Alsace-Lorraine, and Luxembourg) – who would be concentrated in fortified frontier "strongholds" in the hinterlands of Zamość.[128] In order to realize such a monumental feat, however, it was first necessary to purge all local inhabitants who did not meet the prescribed racial criteria – an estimated total of around 140,000 people.[129] To that end, Krumey came over from Łódź and established a field headquarters for the UWZ in October 1942, bringing with him a team of "know-how men" well-versed in the logistics of mass expulsion.[130] The results of the "sample survey" conducted in the Warthegau earlier that spring now took on a heightened practical relevance, as Krumey extrapolated from these figures to predict how many "evacuees" would fall into each of the four RuSHA categories.[131] By the time Himmler finally inaugurated the *Aktion Zamosc* on November 12, 1942, it was pretty clear to his aides that this operation constituted not just the fulfillment of Globocnik's ambitions, but the opening phase of the General Plan for the East.[132] As the SSPF himself proclaimed that same day, "Here we will create a new homeland and a healthy life for ethnic Germans gathered from all over Europe. The safeguarding of all conquered territories for the future depends entirely on the rooting of German people in this soil."[133]

The deportations began several weeks later. In the early morning hours of November 28, 1942, residents in the village of Skierbieszów awoke to the sound of cowbells ringing, dogs barking, and men shouting in German. They emerged from their homes to find around three hundred armed police officers and ethnic German auxiliaries, who escorted them to an assembly point in front of the local schoolhouse, pushing their victims and beating them with clubs and the butt-ends of rifles. Those who resisted or tried to escape were either set upon by the dogs or shot. Once the villagers had been gathered together and

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[125] Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 578-583.

[126] BA R 49/657/14: "Tagesmeldung der RKF," unsigned, July 14, 1942. Also see the postwar testimony of Johannes Müller in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 153.

[127] LOC/NMT, 867-868, Doc. NO-4817: Creutz to Himmler (English transcript), July 3, 1942.

[128] BA NS 19/1757/1: Himmler to Krüger, July 19, 1942; BA NS 19/1446: Globocnik, "Vermerk über Besprechungen mit dem RFSS," August 21, 1942; Globocnik to Krüger, October 21, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 39. Also see Witte, *Dienstkalender*, 493-496.

[129] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 141-142.

[130] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/96: Streckenbach to Krumey, October 21, 1942; Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 151-152.

[131] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 141-142, 287.

[132] Himmler, "Anordnung 17 C," November 12, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 52. That Himmler saw the operation in this way is now widely agreed upon by historians; see e.g. Dieter Pohl, *Vom "Judenpolitik" zum Judenmord. Der Distrikt Lublin des Generalgouvernements 1939-1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1993).

[133] BA R 49/3533/1: Globocnik, "Einsatzbefehl für die Ansiedlung im Kreis Zamosc," November 1942.

registered by the presiding SD commander, they underwent a "rough selection" performed by two RuSHA examiners, who permitted "war-essential" laborers (railway workers, for instance) to move elsewhere in the county, though only if they obtained a rating of RuS-III. By nightfall, few traces remained of the community that had once lived in Skierbieszów. Within the next four days, this process would repeat itself in twelve other neighboring villages; by the end of the year, the number had risen to sixty.[134]

Most deportees were brought by truck to a resettlement camp attached to the UWZ station in Zamość, where a team of four Eignungsprüfer led by SS-Oberführer Hans Rihl carried out a "fine selection" in "the usual way."[135] The majority of these subjects ended up in category RuS-III; those who could work were either handed over to labor officials for deployment in the Reich or retained to toil as indentured servants for incoming ethnic German farmers; those who could not work, particularly children and the elderly, were dumped in so-called "rest villages" outside Warsaw and Radom (the former dwellings of murdered Jews) and left to fend for themselves (many would die of starvation). People who had the misfortune to receive the grades RuS-IV or IVf suffered an even more dreadful fate; they were shipped to the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The race inspectors did not forget to cull their fair share of "racially valuable specimens," however; expellees classified as RuS-I or II were transferred to the Aussenstelle in Łódź and absorbed into the Re-Germanization Procedure – albeit with one important departure from the normal protocol: the SS only sent individual WED candidates to Germany, not whole families, because the children were confiscated from their parents as a matter of course.[136] During the first wave of the *Aktion Zamosc*, between late November 1942 and mid-June 1943, the Nazis "evacuated" 16,618 Polish men, women, and children, of whom 9,658 were recruited for forced labor, 3,399 were deported either to Auschwitz or to one of the "hunger reservations," and 426 became re-Germanizables (the fact that several thousand inmates perished in or escaped from the UWZ camp is a grim indication of the terrible living conditions that prevailed there).[137] In addition to Poles they also

[134] ITS 4.1.2.14/81797493-494: Testimony of Zygmunt Klukowski, November 10, 1947; BA R 75/9/26-33: Krumey, "Bericht über die Arbeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," December 31, 1942. For a good overview on the deportations, see Janina Kiełboń, *Migrajce ludności w dystrykcie lubelskim w latach 1939-1944* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 1995), 13-19. Also see Pohl, *Vom Judenpolitik zum Judenmord*, 156, 168-170.

[135] ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82183005-007: Krumey, "Arbeitsanweisung für das Polensammellager Zamosc," November 21, 1942. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 408, and Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 130-131. There was an additional sister camp in Zwierzyniec, which opened in the spring of 1943, though it only remained operational for several months and nearly all of the internees were funneled into the UWZ Lager in Zamość anyway.

[136] Müller to Himmler, October 31, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 43; Zörner to Frank, February 23, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 201.

[137] USHMMA 15.068M/1/1: Kuchenbäcker, "Jahresbericht der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," December 16, 1943. Some of these figures also come from Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 410-411fn. Himmler and Globocnik also intended to remove the non-German population from the city of Zamość itself; however, though the RuSHA did screen at least 5,472 inhabitants in advance, the expulsions never actually took place due to the obvious logistical complications involved; see BA NS 19/1446: Globocnik, "Vermerk über Besprechungen beim RFSS," August 21, 1942; BA NS 2/59/99: Brandt to Hofmann, August 23, 1942; Weihenmaier to Bühler, November 3, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 44.

evicted 7,072 Ukrainians and relocated them to closed internment camps in Hrubieszów.[138] In their stead came 12,909 resettlers, most of them originally from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Yugoslavia.[139]

All of this occurred alongside a much larger classification enterprise – the "search for German blood" – though here it was the Einwandererzentralstelle that took center stage, given its role as the agency responsible for the naturalization of ethnic German Umsiedler (and, beginning in 1943, WED candidates from Slovenia and Western Europe). By the spring of 1942, local Nazi officials had catalogued some thirty-two thousand "persons of German descent" for this same purpose; the leaders of the EWZ now stepped in and widened the net dramatically. For one thing, they extended the scope of their purview to embrace the entire General Government, including the district of Galicia (present-day western Ukraine), which had been annexed to Frank's dominion after the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941.[140] For another, they reckoned with an overall target figure of five hundred thousand people. To handle the screenings in Lublin and Galicia, EWZ planning specialist Dr. Wilhelm Gradmann traveled to Zamość in March 1942 and formed two new "flying commissions," each with an overall strength of about thirty men, who reported to the EWZ branch office in Kraków. These units became operational in May, charged with determining "who is German and who is not" according to ethnic, racial, social, political, and medical viewpoints.[141]

Their main priority, of course, was to seek out native Volksdeutsche who remained outside the fold, though that proved to be far more complicated than one might think. Although Nazi authorities had identified around ninety thousand people as certifiable ethnic Germans back in 1940, fewer than half of them had actually answered the call to "return" to their "blood homeland." Those who chose to stay behind still enjoyed a privileged status, but they did not receive German citizenship, and while some had been unable to emigrate due to health-related and economic reasons, a good portion of them did not want anything to do with the Nazi regime in any case.[142] This situation was unacceptable to the race and resettlement experts of the SS, who increasingly worried in 1941 that scores of additional ethnic Germans had somehow gone unnoticed by the VoMi and fallen through the cracks.[143] There were also Volksdeutsche whom EWZ officials had rejected in 1940 because they had Polish or Ukrainian forebears, lived in ethnically mixed marriages, did not speak German, or failed to raise their children in the "German spirit" (so-called G-cases). By 1942, this hardline stance had all but disappeared. "When carried out

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[138] NARA T-81/286/2409871-873: Krumey, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," May 1943. 5,587 Polish residents of Hrubieszow were also removed to make room for these incoming Ukrainians from Zamość.

[139] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 190.

[140] In fact, two EWZ operatives had arrived in Galicia and begun composing preliminary surveys as early as October 1941; see BA R 69/716/49-53: Backofen to von Malsen, November 17, 1941.

[141] BA NS 19/3662/74-76: Krüger to Brandt, undated; NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942; NARA T-81/327/2459907-909: Gradmann, "Vermerk über die Besprechung beim EWZ Berlin," May 13, 1942; BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 185," May 20, 1942.

[142] Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1944* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1987), 520.

[143] BA R 69/131/13-16: Seltmann to VoMi Kommandos in Galicia, September 1, 1941.

according to the new guidelines," Gradmann predicted that March, "the result of the renewed screening will be completely different… We cannot afford to exclude these people." The examiners even opted to re-evaluate families whom the Nazis had deported from the incorporated eastern territories between the fall of 1939 and the spring of 1941, reasoning that they too might still qualify for Germanization.[144]

But the most nebulous and potentially abundant group on the radar was undoubtedly those inhabitants labeled "persons of German descent," or Deutschstämmige, a rubric defined in this context as "descendants of German colonists" in "historical German settlement areas" who had abandoned "living expressions of German culture" because they had been "Polonized or Slavicized in a foreign environment." As in western Poland, ethnic affiliation distinguished Deutschstämmige from Volksdeutsche, but it was race ("German or kindred blood") that bound them together. And race, just as much as ethnicity, lay in the eye of the beholder. The principal goal of Nazi Germanization policy in the General Government, one set of EWZ guidelines stated, was to "separate all people who carry German blood from ethnically alien populations" and "mold non-professing Deutschstämmige into self-identifying Volksdeutsche" through a "gradual Germanization procedure"; if left to themselves, these people would "endanger the consolidation of Germandom in the East on account of their German blood quotient and the capabilities they can therefore supply to ethnic aliens."[145] Yet the existence of so many different groupings and subtypes within the Nazis' taxonomy of Germanness highlighted the absence of a truly objective means for constructing ethnic and racial boundaries, replicating the same disjuncture that confounded the "consolidation of Germandom" on the home front. It also meant that the logic of classification hinged in no small measure on the synergy kindled by the encounter between practitioners of Germanization policy and the individual human beings they sought to categorize.

Each of these dynamics becomes tangible when one looks at how the EWZ went about accomplishing its platform of "filtration" in Lublin and Galicia. During the first stage of the process, the VoMi issued provisional certificates to "deserving" subjects, some of whom registered on their own in response to announcements in the press, some of whom were sponsored or subpoenaed by local prefects and Nazi Party activists. In each county, the head of civil administration (*Kreishauptmann*) then passed on all applications to the EWZ commissions, who took over from there as soon as they arrived in the area.[146] As far as determinations of ancestry were concerned, registrants usually had to confirm with independent evidence that they possessed at least one German great-grandparent (a "12.5% German pedigree"). This was already an astonishingly low benchmark, and even those who could not meet it were not automatically disbarred. In lieu of written documentation, a "sworn verbal affidavit of German

[144] NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942; BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 185," May 20, 1942.

[145] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 186," May 20, 1942; BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Richtlinien der Staatsangehörigkeitsstelle für die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen und Deutschstämmigen," May 1942.

[146] BA NS 19/3662/40-48: Losacker to Distrikt Gouverneurs in the General Government, February 3, 1943.

descent" sufficed if authenticated by supplementary factors such as proficiency in the German language, family name, religious confession, place of birth, migration history, and military or public service. In keeping with the standard praxis employed by the EWZ up to that time, the men who weighed these "external features" and deliberated over questions of ancestry (the ethnicity advisers) were almost always local Volksdeutsche whose familiarity with conditions on the ground provided "a detailed overview of the individual persons in their locale." It was they who ascertained a candidate's "ethnic-political reliability" and "worthiness for Germanization," but the same intimate knowledge that made them indispensable (especially as translators) also ensured that their findings would be heavily predicated on reputation, hearsay, and personal relationships, no matter how much the Nazis tried to discourage this.[147]

Nevertheless, while the word of the ethnicity advisers could seriously impact whether or not someone gained acceptance as a bonafide ethnic German, cultural attributes and national affiliation were far from the only considerations that governed the final verdict. "For Deutschstämmige," one high-ranking EWZ functionary explained, "an affirmation of Germanness is preferred, not mandatory."[148] Globocnik likewise insisted that "Here it is not important which language one speaks or whether they are aware of what has now become self-evident to Germans; here all that matters is the salvation of German blood."[149] The authority to ascertain "racial value," both in its anthropological and eugenic dimensions, still rested with professional agents of the state, most of whom cared little about proof of ancestry and less about *völkisch* qualifications. Even if someone could not corroborate descent from any German progenitors, they would still be eligible for inclusion if the RuSHA inspectors embedded with the commissions declared them RuS-I or RuS-II based on "racial phenotype." As clarified by one directive from the EWZ leadership in Berlin, "The racial examination does not depend on the percentage of German blood on hand, the motives that induced the applicant to come forward, or the social strata he or she occupies."[150] In a similar vein, the medical doctors who worked for the EWZ paid far more attention to "hereditary-biological characteristics" than anything else, though the use of intelligence from police informants in the appraisal of "social worth" dictated that their rulings were not entirely free from outside

[147] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Richtlinien der Staatsangehörigkeitsstelle für die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen und Deutschstämmigen," May 1942; BA R 69/1313: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 212," September 27, 1943; BA R 186/10: Arlt, "Richtlinien zur Verordnung über die Einführung einer Kennkarte für deutsche Volkszugehorige," undated. Interestingly, some of these men came from among the dubious ethnic Germans Frank had initially recruited as a native security force; see Peter Black, "Indigenous Collaboration in the Government General: The Case of the Sonderdienst," in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, eds. Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblitt (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 243-266.

[148] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 186," May 20, 1942

[149] BA R 49/3533/1: Globocnik, "Einsatzbefehl für die Ansiedlung im Kreis Zamosc," November 1942.

[150] BA R 186/1: Backofen to EWZ Nebenstelle Kraków, April 7, 1943.

bias either. For the most part, both the Eignungsprüfer and the physicians adhered to the principle that "the smaller the German blood share, the greater the significance of racial and biological traits."[151]

There were many Nazis who did not hesitate to air their displeasure with this approach, and with the power vested in the EWZ more generally. In the Warthegau, Arthur Greiser attacked the "search for German blood" as an intolerably lenient and diluted framework that jeopardized the legitimacy of the Volksliste as practiced within his domain.[152] Civil servants in the General Government itself were none too thrilled that Himmler's cronies had effectively usurped a prerogative they felt rightfully belonged to them, and Frank worried that there would soon be no distinction at all between Germans and non-Germans. Although his underlings technically had a say in naturalization proceedings, their objections became so routine that the EWZ commissioners often declined to cooperate further.[153] The initiative also produced a series of cross-cutting disputes and internal rivalries within the SS. Despite their divergent backgrounds and expertise, the individual sections of the EWZ by and large held to a standpoint encapsulated by their mantra "blood before ethos," meaning they usually set aside political or cultural markers of Germanness in favor of racial criteria. Many VoMi deputies, however, argued that whoever had hitherto demurred on the opportunity to acquire German citizenship should not get a second chance. Like their counterparts within the Nazi Party bureaucracy and the civil administration, these men understandably took umbrage when the EWZ commissions suddenly rolled into town and overturned their rulings.[154] The police and security functionaries who dominated the UWZ, on the other hand, criticized the methods of both the VoMi and the EWZ. Krumey complained that the issuance of provisional certificates took place in a sloppy and overly liberal fashion, alleging that VoMi officials and their ethnic German helpers often distributed these credentials for "personal reasons" (which exempted the recipients from deportation).[155] He was equally annoyed by the frequency with which he had to release expellees from the internment camps because the EWZ commissions suddenly claimed they were "persons of German descent," even though the Eignungsprüfer allocated to the UWZ had previously judged them to be "racially inferior (RuS-IV)."[156] It was also not uncommon for the same examiners to vouch for the "racial value" of people whom their colleagues in the EWZ had rejected.[157]

All of these contradictions paralleled and magnified the strong differences of opinion that abounded inside the EWZ commissions themselves. In June 1942, one race inspector in Lublin pointed to

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[151] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Richtlinien der Staatsangehörigkeitsstelle für die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen und Deutschstämmigen," May 1942; NARA T-81/327/2459907-909: Gradmann, "Vermerk über die Besprechung beim EWZ Berlin," May 13, 1942.

[152] BA NS 19/3662/78-79: Greiser to Himmler, March 16, 1943. Also see Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 73.

[153] NARA T-175/73/2590420-421: Greifelt to Himmler, November 4, 1942.

[154] Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 214-215; Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 256.

[155] ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82183014-033: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ," December 31, 1943; BA R 75/9/26-33: Krumey, "Bericht über die Arbeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," December 31, 1942.

[156] NARA T81/286/2409871-873: Krumey, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," May 1943.

[157] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 134.

a pair of cases in which the head of Commission XV ignored his protests and forwarded "below-average" subjects on to the citizenship office for immediate naturalization: "Although he wants to reclaim these families for Germandom… I consider the Germanization of fully Polonized ethnic aliens from category RuS-IV to be simply absurd."[158] In other instances, the conclusions of the Eignungsprüfer seemed to be all that mattered, or as one official remarked, "For us, 12.5% German ancestry is good enough. Sometimes people are admitted who do not have any German blood at all. We go by the positive result of the racial examination alone."[159] Concerned that RuSHA personnel had exceeded their competencies and applied physiognomic criteria to widely divergent ends, the EWZ leadership intervened by declaring "There is only one racial standard; milder or stricter judgments do not correspond to existing instructions." The most troubling recurrent issue, however, concerned the discrepancies that once again set anthropological and eugenic understandings of race in opposition to one another. An April 1943 memorandum composed at EWZ headquarters in Berlin underlined the problematic nature of this incongruity: "There are a number of borderline cases in which the doctors submit a negative evaluation… while the same cases receive a positive evaluation from the Eignungsprüfer. It is thus quite difficult for the citizenship office to decide which ruling should be accorded greater weight."[160]

The trouble did not end there either. In addition to the race examiners, physicians, and ethnicity advisers, the SD and Interior Ministry representatives delegated to each EWZ commission also had the right to approve or veto applications, as did the local Kreishauptmänner. As with the "filtration" of ethnic German Umsiedler in 1939-1940, the dissonance created by so many voices clamoring to be heard gradually produced a classificatory schema as intricate as it was preposterous. At first, a person or family could theoretically become Volksdeutsche if they were of "pure German descent" and achieved a racial grade of RuS-I through IV, if they could prove "50% or more German ancestry" with a score of RuS-I to III, or if they had at least one German grandparent and boasted a mark of RuS-I or II. All of this was contingent on the subjects having exhibited their devotion to Nazism and German cultural identity – a whole other can of worms laden with its own thick coating of conditions and exceptions. The same proviso did not apply for recognition as a Deutschstämmige, which only required that someone have at least two German grandparents and a ranking of RuS-I to III or, if they had fewer German forebears (one great-grandparent was the baseline), an assessment of RuS-I or II. As this breakdown indicates, the smaller the percentage of "German blood," the more "racial-biological qualities" came into play.[161] In early 1943, however, the EWZ leadership overhauled these guidelines – the outcome of Himmler's instigation as well as the internecine quarrels that divided commissions in the field. The requirements for

[158] BA R 69/601/131: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV to Dongus, June 6, 1942.
[159] BA NS 19/3662/65-66: Greiser to Himmler, April 15, 1943.
[160] BA R 186/1: Backofen to EWZ Nebenstelle Kraków, April 7, 1943.
[161] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Richtlinien der Staatsangehörigkeitsstelle für die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen und Deutschstämmigen," May 1942.

Volksdeutsche stayed pretty much the same, though now the category of Deutschstämmige was divided into Group A and Group B, with the former recommended for "conditional state subjecthood" and the latter "earmarked" for naturalization at a future date. Group A comprised people whom the EWZ had already endorsed as "persons of German descent" according to the previous regimen, though Group B contained a long list of additional prospects: individuals or families with "25 to 50% German ancestry" if deemed at least RuS-III, subjects classified as RuS-IV with a minimum of three German grandparents, "questionable cases whose rejection would signify a loss of German blood," "renegades who have not acted against Germandom since the beginning of the war," and "pure ethnic aliens" with a grade of RuS-I or II (essentially equivalent to WED candidates). What is most noteworthy here is that the more confused and contested definitions of Germanness became, the more the arc of the project bent toward a trajectory of inclusion.[162] But these modifications also accentuated the fundamental instability of the system, a flaw that became more apparent when Globocnik instructed the EWZ and the VoMi to reexamine old casework in May 1943. "There exists the danger," he reminded associates, "that paper documents do not tell the truth, or rather, that persons of German descent cannot verify the necessary blood quotient even though many other factors attest to their racial purity. The opposite can also be true."[163]

The monthly reports of the EWZ commissions in Lublin and Galicia offer a fascinating glimpse into the interior world of the men tasked with translating these categories into reality and delineating the contours of race on the outer edges of the Nazi empire. First of all, it is important to keep in mind that their encounters with the indigenous population were framed to an enormous extent by the grossly impoverished circumstances of wartime daily life in the eastern Polish countryside – a situation that all but affirmed pre-existing views of the East as a chaotic, dirty, diseased space. It was a setting they described in terms of its "endless primitive villages and poor road conditions," a place where medical care was "as good nothing" and "lice, scabies, and so forth" ran rampant, where most of the inhabitants were "underweight and transitioning to serious starvation" and many had "already started eating grass."[164] The puzzling vagaries of national indifference and cultural hybridity reinforced this perception of alien backwardness. While most supposed ethnic Germans in Galicia had "totally forgotten their mother tongue," the fact that some spoke archaic Swabian or Franconian dialects in addition to Polish and Ukrainian only made them more unnerving to Nazi assessors, as did their "shoddy and filthy clothing."[165] Although Globocnik took great pains to stress the imperative to "reclaim every bearer of German blood,

[162] BA R 186/11: Backofen, "Ergänzungen zur Anordnung Nr. 186," January 13, 1943; BA R 69/1313: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 212," September 27, 1943; BA R 186/35: Hahn, "Ergänzungen zur Anordnung Nr. 212," October 7, 1943.

[163] BA R 49/3553/35-36: Globocnik, "Dienstanweisung Nr. 8," May 11, 1943.

[164] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943; BA R 69/602/220: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Bericht über die rassische Struktur der deutschstämmigen Bevölkerung im Kreis Kalusz," November 18, 1942.

[165] BA R 69/602/220: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Bericht über die rassische Zusammensetzung der deutschen Volkszugehörige in Drohobycz," August 3, 1942.

even if they have gone to wrack and ruin," the psychological impact of these initial impressions clearly exerted a dramatic influence over classification process.[166] One Eignungsprüfer in Galicia admitted as much: "In light of our insufficient ability to communicate and the highly primitive nature of the subjects, it is often extremely difficult to reach an objective conclusion."[167]

This sense of estrangement explains why EWZ physicians suspected that many natives were products of incest, why they wrote them off as "socially decadent" and "mentally challenged," why they diagnosed them with "manifest hereditary illnesses," and why they handed over "congenital idiots and defectives" to the Gestapo for execution.[168] It also preordained some supremely disappointing results. The RuSHA delegate assigned to Commission XVI asserted that the peasants of Stanisławów were "composed almost entirely of inferior races" with "significant Mongolian and Gypsy blood"; in nearby Drohobycz, he attributed "racially alien elements" detected among the local ethnic German populace not only to the county's (deceased) Jewish minority, but to the history of Ukraine as a conduit of invasion for Turkic nomads from the depths of the Central Asian steppe (the Soviets being the most recent example).[169] Skeptical about the "racial quality" of the "Germans" they evaluated, the Eignungsprüfer demanded "greater caution" and a "more stringent methodology" so that the EWZ only collected "high-value subjects" and not "every bit of trash that comes along."[170] There were deeper emotional reactions and symbolic referents at work here too, ones which tied neatly into feelings of class prejudice and racist chauvinism. In recounting their experiences in Lublin and Galicia, the EWZ commissioners repeatedly conveyed profound anxieties of devolution, deracination, and loss of identity – hallucinatory visions of a Germanic elite engulfed by the Slavic Flood and remanded to the void of a listless and anonymous proletarian mass. This was not all that dissimilar from the apprehensive state of mind that plagued inspectors charged with screening foreign workers in Germany, not to mention the nativist intolerance expressed by many German civilians on the home front, though the exotic and menacing aura of the East naturally made these sensations all the more palpable when filtered through the lens of the race examiners' dystopian worldview.

In each case, the source of anxiety derived from older debates surrounding the relative merits and pitfalls of miscegenation. According to one periodical covering the "search for German blood" in the General Government, "The determination of who has German blood demands a thorough investigation

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[166] For Globocnik's quote, see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 384.

[167] BA R 69/602/320: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Abschlussbericht über die rassische Zusammensetzung der deutschstämmigen Bevölkerung im Distrikt Galizien," November 14, 1943.

[168] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943.

[169] BA R 69/602/225-226: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, August 28, 1942; BA R 69/602/199-200: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, May 20, 1943; BA R 69/131/59: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Schleusungsbericht für Kreis Drohobycz," undated.

[170] BA R 69/601/129: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI , "Bericht über die Bevölkerung der Kreis Drohobycz," August 27, 1942; BA R 69/602/188-189: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, September 10, 1943.

[because] only a tiny fraction of the people who live here have kept their German bloodlines totally pure."[171] One Eignungsprüfer in Zamość lamented in similar terms that "Deutschstämmige in villages where the Polish element predominates usually have to be rejected with grade IV"; to do otherwise, he contended, would "blur the margins of natural, racially-conditioned distinctions" and increase "the danger of leveling."[172] The race inspector from Commission XVI warned of a similar "deformation" or "suppression of Germanic blood" that almost always occurred "when German settlers here engaged in ethnic interbreeding," a "subsidence of the racial and social sphere" evidenced by the prevalence of "round skull-shapes" and "dark pigmentation" that "no longer have anything in common with the Nordic phenotype." While the local Ukrainians in Stanisławów betrayed "noteworthy infusions of Nordic blood," they also showed signs of "racial characteristics that have developed to their disadvantage," proof of the "hazy edges" and "fluid intersections" that emerged from "cross-pollination." In the "racial mosaic" of the East, he concluded, "no discrete race can distinguish itself; nearly all that remains are the most unfavorable composite mixtures."[173] All of these statements strongly suggest that in militating against ethnic and racial amalgamation, the Nazis aimed to prevent the erosion of conceptual boundaries and dichotomies between metropole and periphery, German and non-German, Self and Other. That which they believed they stood above and strove to destroy was that which they feared they may become.

To deflect and compensate for this uncanny "slippage of similarity," the race examiners fell back on the myth of "lost German blood." Although largely unimpressed by the residents of Stanisławów, the Eignungsprüfer in Commission XVI granted that intermarriage with Germanic settlers had "in most cases worked to the racial and biological benefit of the ethnically alien segment [of the population]."[174] He also discovered that their neighbors in Stryj and Kałusz "set themselves apart" through the "accumulation of racially valuable elements" despite having no memory of their purportedly Germanic roots.[175] His counterpart in Lublin, working within EWZ Commission XV, informed superiors in November 1942 that his findings for the previous month were better than ever because he had screened "the Polish intelligentsia, which, as is well-known, possesses larger shares of Nordic and Dinaric blood."[176] Always on the lookout for potential WED candidates, he reported with pride that one young woman had not only attained the rarefied grade RuS-I, but encouraged family members to apply for re-Germanization too,

[171] NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim, Acc. 132/90 Nr. 202: Das Schwarze Korps, "Deutschblütige werden erfasst. Die Rückführung der deutschstämmigen Menschen aus dem Generalgouvernement," unsigned, undated.

[172] BA R 69/601/126: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV, "Erfahrungsbericht für den Monat Juli 1942," August 8, 1942; BA R 69/601/123: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV, "Erfahrungsbericht für den Monat August 1942," September 1, 1942.

[173] BA R 69/602/199-200: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, May 20, 1943; BA R 69/602/192-193: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, August 10, 1943.

[174] BA R 69/602/199-200: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, May 20, 1943.

[175] BA R 69/602/220: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Bericht über die rassische Zusammensetzung der deutschen Volkszugehörige in Drohobycz," August 3, 1942.

[176] BA R 69/601/115: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV, "Erfahrungsbericht für den Monat Oktober 1942," November 3, 1942.

boasting that "she had been hand-picked because she looks like a German."[177] After reading through the observations of his colleagues in Lublin and Galicia, the chief RuSHA official at the EWZ office in Łódź captured the ideological essence of racial diffusionism when he wrote, "At the very least, it is especially obvious here that German settler blood has splintered and infiltrated even the most remote of racially inferior and ethnically alien environments."[178] These dramatic swings between vexation and rapture were a trademark of Nazi Germanization policy all over Europe; although Himmler's race and resettlement experts insisted that the occupied territories contained huge amounts of "Nordic blood," they never seemed to find very much of it; but when they did, the experience restored faith in the certainties of their unitary worldview.

This leads us to the question of what role ordinary people played in their own classification. Given that SS and police functionaries had standing orders to "keep an eye out for persons of German blood during all official dealings and other interactions with the populace," it is clear that many civilians did not apply voluntarily.[179] EWZ guidelines specifically stated that civilians could be "proposed for recognition as Germans against their will."[180] Globocnik drove the point home even further: "Bearers of German blood cannot treat it as private property… Those who refuse must be brought in by force."[181] Some individuals did brave the consequences of noncompliance by declining to appear for their examination or spurning German overtures outright. On one occasion in June 1942, 354 individuals failed to show up for their scheduled appointments, and the race inspector in Commission XVI maintained that "non-Germans with a good racial score often reject naturalization and want to remain ethnic aliens."[182] After the onset of *Aktion Zamosc*, of course, public awareness of the deportations made it very hard to resist the enticements of preferential status, and many Nazi officials had no qualms whatsoever about resorting to strong-arm tactics to get their way. Hence, the Kreishauptmann of Dębica issued the following dictum to one Julian Hammer in the summer of 1942: "Because you were given a deadline of three months to join the German community and have not availed yourself of this offer, you are hereby ordered to leave the city of Rzeszów and take your Polish wife with you… Should either of you return, I will send you to a concentration camp and take your under-aged children into state custody."[183] In November 1943, SS leaders in Berlin systematized this strategy of coercion. That month, EWZ chief Lambert von Malsen-Ponickau presided over a case in which two young women of "pure German

[177] BA R 69/601/125: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV to Dongus, July 25, 1942
[178] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943.
[179] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 94.
[180] BA R 186/35: Malsen, "Richtlinien der Staatsangehörigkeitsstelle für die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen und Deutschstämmigen," May 1942.
[181] BA R 49/3553/35-36: Globocnik, "Dienstanweisung Nr. 8," May 11, 1943.
[182] BA R 69/602/320: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI, "Abschlussbericht über die rassische Zusammensetzung der deutschstämmigen Bevölkerung im Distrikt Galizien," November 14, 1943; USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943.
[183] ITS 4.1.2/81794645: Kreishauptmann Debica to Julian Hammer, June 27, 1942.

descent" refused to undergo a racial evaluation on the grounds that they had Polish boyfriends and considered themselves to be Poles as well. Their mother, who had filed applications on their behalf, was "highly distressed by the behavior of her daughters and requests the arrangement of appropriate measures." Himmler ruled that both women should be "taken into protective custody and transferred to an education camp," where they would be "won over through proper treatment and guidance." He also ordered subordinates "to deal with all similar cases in the same way."[184]

Nevertheless, many inhabitants of the General Government came forward of their own volition to claim a spot within the *Volksgemeinschaft*, for the most part because hunger and destitution exercised such a galvanizing effect that the Nazis did not even need to threaten them with arrest or expulsion. The reports of the EWZ commissions are filled with tales of scabrous, emaciated subjects waiting on line for ID cards that might mean the difference between survival and starvation – a state of affairs more than a few administrators looked upon with dismay. While noting that some people were "still too proud to be 'bread Germans,'" one VoMi official in Galicia decried the fact that efforts to publicize the "search for German blood" seemed only to attract "the poor and the hungry," as opposed to their social betters, though he ultimately conceded that "the most successful propaganda is the improvement of living conditions and increased allocation of food rations to the underprivileged."[185] HSSPF Wilhelm Krüger arrived at a similar conclusion: "Those who register willingly often do it for material reasons, out of economic necessity… Those who have not yet enrolled have no compelling economic reason to do so."[186]

Both of these men exaggerated; poverty was not the lone motivating factor that drove applicants to climb on board. VoMi and EWZ employees touted an appreciable "reawakening of the German national feeling" on the basis of the "many people [who] now remember the German ethnic culture of their parents and grandparents and report to government agencies in order to be counted among the Germans."[187] And whether they followed an instinct for self-preservation or truly bought into what the Nazis were selling (or both), in most cases the outcome remained the same, as one EWZ functionary recognized: "Affiliations to Germandom are quite zealously avowed due to widespread knowledge of the resettlements, though in most case it is probably only a matter of paying lip-service in the hope of gaining material benefits… On the other hand, it can be said in general that the subjects endeavor to learn the German language, actively participate in training courses, and seek to labor for the German side in one way or another."[188] This depiction of grassroots engagement may have been embellished, but it was not totally misleading; signs of conformity, even enthusiasm, could be found in a variety of locales. In May

[184] BA R 69/1313: Malsen, "Anordnung Nr. 215," November 24, 1943.
[185] BA R 69/131/48-51: Seltmann, "Bericht betr. Deutschstämmigen in Galizien," undated.
[186] BA NS 19/3662/74-76: Krüger to Brandt, undated.
[187] NARA T81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942; BA R 69/131/7: Seltmann, "An Alle Personen deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit und deutscher Abstammung in Galizien," October 1941.
[188] USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943.

and September 1943, one Polish contemporary bemoaned the effectiveness of Germanization in towns like Szczebrzeszyn, describing numerous scenes of children running around in Hitler Youth uniforms carrying swastikas. "On the streets," he confided to his diary, "nearly everyone is a German."[189]

Most of these people probably did not suspect that acquiescence often led to resettlement anyhow. In principle, "persons of German descent" were not supposed to be conscripted for forced labor in Germany because Himmler wanted to keep them on hand to advance the Germanization of the General Government, though SS officials did transport at least eight thousand of them to the Reich for "educational purposes" (eventually they became WED candidates).[190] This stipulation applied first and foremost to "pure ethnic aliens" with a racial grade of RuS-I or II, whose "migration to Germany" Himmler presaged in the summer of 1942.[191] Subjects of "proven German ancestry" whom the EWZ rebuffed for "ethnic-political reasons" sometimes ended up in the Reich too. Gradmann advised as early as March 1942 that such individuals "should under no circumstances remain in the village community," since "German blood which we do not take for ourselves can have an adverse impact on the work of Germanization."[192] Globocnik repeated this message a little over a year later: "Deutschstämmige who are excluded cannot be allowed to stay put and go into hiding as foreign adversaries; whenever possible, they must be furnished with a new livelihood in the Reich."[193] A document from the RKF Stabshauptamt reveals what happened to these individuals after their arrival in Germany. On May 26, 1944, Ulrich Greifelt notified all HSSPFs in the Reich that inbound Deutschstämmige "must be designated by the responsible authorities as re-Germanizables" and "treated according to the guidelines for re-Germanizable persons."[194] Like the Deutsche Volksliste in western Poland, the "search for German blood" in the General Government functioned in part as a vessel for augmenting the WED. The story of Johanna Achidzanjanz from Tomaszów illustrates how this process went down. On February 10, 1943, the head of EWZ Commission XV apprised Globocnik of the following: "The aforementioned was screened on January 25. She possesses 50% German ancestry and a good racial evaluation. She fervently rejects Germanization and refuses to learn the German language or become a German. Because this concerns an intelligentsia case – she is a doctor – a transfer to the Old Reich appears expedient; here she would be a

[189] Zygmunt Klukowski, *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-1945* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 253-254, 258-259.

[190] BA R 186/35: Greifelt, "Anordnung Nr. 2/144," June 13, 1944. Also see Karsten Linne, "Die deutsche Arbeitsverwaltung zwischen 'Volkstumspolitik' und Arbeiterrekrutierung – das Beispiel Warthegau" in *Pflicht, Zwang und Gewalt: Arbeitsverwaltungen und Arbeitskräftepolitik im deutsch besetzten Polen und Serbien 1939-1944*, eds. Florien Dierl, Zoran Janjetović, and Karsten Linne (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2013), 180.

[191] BA R 69/601/142-143: Bender to Dongus, July 19, 1942; BA R 69/602/130: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XVI to Dongus, November 2, 1943.

[192] NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942.

[193] BA R 49/3553/35-36: Globocnik, "Dienstanweisung Nr. 8," May 11, 1943.

[194] BA R 186/35: Greifelt to HSSPFs, May 26, 1944.

poor role model, even a danger, to other Deutschstämmige."[195] When the Nazis did relocate "persons of German descent," however it was usually to one of the newly founded SS settler colonies in Zamość – if necessary, by force – where they lived together with ethnic German Umsiedler from all over Europe.[196]

Inside and outside of these settlements, Deutschstämmige underwent a comprehensive program of assimilation highly similar to the one devised for WED candidates in the Reich (albeit much more intensive and tightly regulated). According to the chief VoMi agent in Galicia, Lothar von Seltmann, freshly minted registrants had to "prove in their daily life" that "the German blood in their veins is still active"; the successful completion of this "probationary period" would also demonstrate to the authorities (who constantly monitored them) that they were inspired not by material gain, but by "an honest and genuinely felt reversal of disposition, a newly aroused consciousness of German origins."[197] Nazi officials in the General Government did not intend to keep Deutschstämmige mired in a state of indigence, however; they too propagated a format of identity politics that linked racial ascription, social status, and material culture. "Above all," Seltmann wrote, "we must ensure that they live in better economic circumstances than ethnic aliens. Such measures will make it emphatically clear to them that they are valued as members of our *Volk* on account of their German blood." Beyond providing them with higher wages and essential commodities like food, clothing, and fuel, Nazi supervisors also went to great lengths to teach their charges "proper" domestic hygiene and interior design, facilitate "home improvements," and erect an infrastructure of communal living (town halls, markets, cinemas, recreation centers, and so forth).[198] All of these privileges and amenities would ostensibly mold a public environment in which "the external configuration of their farms, wardrobe, and mannerisms not only differentiate them from ethnic aliens, but awaken and develop their creative capabilities."[199]

Much like on the home front and elsewhere in occupied Europe, the socio-economic empowerment of "racially valuable" non-Germans overlapped with a paternalistic framework of cultural and political "enlightenment." "Due to their foreign upbringing," Globocnik averred, "the Deutschstämmige are not in a position to recover on their own… They must be brought to a higher standard of civilization, which can only be done through an education in the philosophy of National Socialism."[200] In each village, the VoMi appointed special "community leaders" (usually ethnic Germans from outside the region, assisted by "reliable" native deputies), while an army of the predominantly

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[195] BA NS 19/3662/24-25: Backofen to Globocnik, February 10, 1943. Also see LOC/NMT, 647-648.

[196] NARA T-81/327/2459907-909: Gradmann, "Vermerk über die Besprechung beim EWZ Berlin," May 13, 1942. According to a report from Krumey in June 1943, Deutschstämmigen made up around one-third of all the occupants in these settlements; see Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 169-170, 201.

[197] BA R 69/131/7: Seltmann, "An Alle Personen deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit und deutscher Abstammung in Galizien," October 1941.

[198] BA R 69/131/40-48: Seltmann, "Dienstanweisung für Mitarbeiter der VoMi in Galizien," January 28, 1942. Also see Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 240.

[199] BA R 49/3553/30-34: Globocnik, "Richtlinien zur kulturellen Betreuung der Siedler," May 12, 1943.

[200] BA R 49/3553/35-36: Globocnik, "Dienstanweisung Nr. 8," May 11, 1943.

female Nazi activists and social workers set about building schools and kindergartens, holding nightly language classes, and convening indoctrination sessions. "Personal contact," one memorandum emphasized, "is the most effective means of Germanization. Our people will meet with the settlers every day and aid their progression step by step. They have the task of introducing Deutschstämmige to the German way of life."[201] These advisers also oversaw a variety of activities and social functions designed to instill their pupils with a habitus of the racial elect. As one might expect, this process entailed granting them access to civil rights and public services forbidden to Poles and Ukrainians.[202] But it also extended far beyond that, drawing on the voluminous ethnographic literature of the interwar years as a blueprint for shaping practically every sphere of private life as well. Subjects were compelled to adopt modern German farming techniques, compete in athletic events (horse-riding, boxing, wrestling, prize-shooting), and participate in artistic endeavors like choirs, folk dancing, and theater troupes. The VoMi even devoted resources to jump-starting an artisanal cottage industry in handicrafts (weaving, spinning, embroidery, dyeing) and the production of traditional peasant garb, which "persons of German descent" would then don as an "outward mark distinguishing their worth." They also had to amend time-honored familial sacraments like birthdays, weddings, and funerals to match ceremonial usages drawn from National Socialist lore, while forsaking the celebration of religious holidays like Christmas and Easter and replacing them with a calendar of seasonal festivals informed by the pseudo-pagan mysticism of the SS. These were the artificial customs and invented traditions through which the purveyors of Nazi Germanization policy hoped to solidify a fictive kinship of "tribal belonging" built on "mutual support," "bonds of affection," and "commonality."[203] "In spite of our growing administrative duties," proclaimed one civil servant in Zamość in late September 1943, "we have managed to carry out all of this in the entire German settlement zone… so as to integrate these people into a viable ethnic community."[204]

It is impossible to say with certainty whether any of the subjects he spoke of actually internalized such patently contrived performances of identity. The record indicates that many Deutschstämmige did lord it over former Polish or Ukrainian compatriots who remained outside the circle of the racial elite (economic exploitation in particular provoked bitter tensions between the two groups).[205] Likewise, even some of Globocnik's rivals within the Frank administration who visited his newfangled agrarian communes could not help but rave about their "extensive German impression" and the "obvious satisfaction of the colonists."[206] But it is equally apparent that, much like in the incorporated eastern territories of western Poland, Nazi Germanization policy failed to stimulate feelings of egalitarian

[201] NARA T-81/295/2420657-666: Gradmann, "Das Deutschtum im Gebiet von Zamosc," March 19, 1942; Harten, *De-Kulturation*, 117-118. Also see Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 240.
[202] BA R 186/35: Herold to Wagner, March 4, 1943.
[203] BA R 49/3553/30-34: Globocnik, "Richtlinien zur kulturellen Betreuung der Siedler," May 12, 1943.
[204] Kreishauptmann Zamość to Zörner, September 24, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 376.
[205] Schutzpolizei Lublin to Gendarmerie Lublin, March 8, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 225.
[206] Fischer to Bühler, May 14, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 272.

camaraderie, at least not to the extent envisioned by Himmler's operatives. The head of EWZ Commission XVI complained in March 1943 that many Reich German civilians in the area showed little appreciation for "ethnic questions" and often publicly ridiculed both Deutschstämmige and native Volksdeutsche as "renegades" and "Polacks" – "embarrassing encounters" which undermined the "painstaking efforts" of government agencies and made it exceedingly difficult for these people to "find their way back to Germandom."[207] Seltmann observed something very similar: "Time and again Reich Germans ask the unsympathetic question of why we have placed this 'Polish rabble' on a pedestal when they do not speak German, and they make no secret of this hostile attitude in their dealings with Deutschstämmige… Given that they are not regarded as fully-fledged members of the German nation, it is only natural that many Deutschstämmige feel betrayed." The VoMi tried to erase these rifts by launching a press campaign dedicated to reducing "the total ignorance of the history of this land among Reich Germans who grew up in the safety of the motherland and their consequent lack of compassion for Polonized Germans who have been left defenseless against foreign influences for generations."[208] Yet the futility of such propaganda quickly became evident, not least because these "dangerous misunderstandings" were not confined to émigrés from Germany. Globocnik mentioned in May 1943 that indigenous Volksdeutsche also viewed the Deutschstämmige as "Germans of inferior quality," while ethnic German resettlers from abroad took to derisively referring to them as "blacks."[209]

It is hardly surprising, then, that "persons of German descent" in the General Government chafed under the emotional burden of second-class citizenship, not to mention state-imposed restrictions to their personal freedom. Like WED candidates in the Reich, they could not accrue enough social and cultural capital to authenticate their membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft* because a substantial number of Germans did not truly accept the racial categories that underpinned their incorporation. This disconnect was perceptible among the Deutschstämmige too. Seltmann discerned that many simply could not stomach the tenets of Nazi ideology: "They are not fond of 'racial theory,' or as they see it, the classification of people into 'humans' and 'subhumans' and the 'spectrum of value' applied to Germans themselves. They deny their Germanness in order to avoid being National Socialists."[210] In response, more than a few Nazi officials began blaming them for their own marginalization. According to the head of Commission XVI, most of the problems facing Deutschstämmige could be eliminated entirely if they would just consent to "learn the German language, re-establish connections with German life, and

[207] BA R 186/35: Herold to Wagner, March 4, 1943.
[208] BA R 69/131/48-51: Seltmann, "Bericht betr. Deutschstämmige in Galizien," undated.
[209] BA R 49/3553/35-36: Globocnik, "Dienstanweisung Nr. 8," May 11, 1943; Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 198.
[210] BA R 69/131/48-51: Seltmann, "Bericht betr. Deutschstämmige in Galizien," undated.

embrace the German worldview." "After all," he pointed out, "it is incumbent upon them to become valuable members of the German ethnic community."[211]

The greatest threat to racial consolidation in eastern Poland, however, was undoubtedly the mayhem unleashed by the deportations. The UWZ had never actually been able to fulfill its quota of "evacuees" because most of them fled to the forests before the police showed up. Krumey admitted in December 1942 that his men had apprehended just thirty percent of the expected 33,382 targets, and though they had displaced over forty thousand people as of March 1943, they had only captured around fifteen of them.[212] Even worse, villagers who absconded took their movable possessions with them and burned whatever they left behind rather than allow it to fall into German hands, coming back only to plunder food, agricultural equipment, and livestock from recently arrived colonists under cover of darkness.[213] It was not long before these refugees started joining the partisans; then they returned to their former homes to visit bloody retribution upon those who now occupied them. The first such attack occurred on December 10, 1942 in the village of Nawóz, where assailants torched several farms and killed a handful of resettlers; the Germans retaliated shortly thereafter by executing 150 hostages in nearby Kitów.[214] This cycle of violence quickly escalated over subsequent weeks. After a group of "uprooted Polish farmers from Zamosc" murdered thirty ethnic German civilians in the town of Cieszyn in late January 1943, an enraged Himmler demanded "ruthless reprisal measures" and instructed HSSPF Krüger to "annihilate entire Polish villages if necessary."[215] What followed, by Krüger's own admission, were "mass shootings of innocent civilians, especially women and children," even though such atrocities did nothing but feed new recruits to the insurgency and incite further acts of vengeance against exposed German enclaves.[216] The brutality of the guerrilla war also touched off a separate wave of ethnic cleansing, as nationalist Ukrainian militias began driving Polish residents from contested areas of Lublin and Galicia – an unintended consequence of Globocnik's ambitious resettlement venture which rapidly descended into the tit-for-tat destruction of entire communities.[217] By February 1943, the district governor of Lublin, Ernst Zörner, had ample reason to blame the deportations for creating an intolerable security situation in which local agricultural output had essentially ground to a halt. "Zamosc has become an

[211] BA R 186/35: Herold to Wagner, March 4, 1943.

[212] BA R 75/9/26-33: Krumey, "Bericht über die Arbeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," December 31, 1942. For the second pair of figures, see Winstone, *Dark Heart*, 198.

[213] ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82183014-033: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ," December 31, 1943; Zörner to Frank, February 23, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 201.

[214] Klukowski, *Diary of the War Years*, 230-231.

[215] NARA T-175/73/2590448: Krüger to Himmler, January 28, 1943; LOC/NMT, 872, Doc. NO-2781: Himmler to Krüger (English transcript), February 1, 1943.

[216] Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 220-221.

[217] Winstone, *Dark Heart*, 204-206.

inferno," he wrote, "which casts its shadow far beyond the borders of the district. As a result, Bolshevism no longer seems quite so terrifying to the Polish population."[218]

The increasingly vociferous protests lodged by Zörner and his colleagues within the civil administration, not to mention their refusal to cooperate with Globocnik and the SS, gradually convinced Frank to challenge Himmler's authority.[219] On May 25, 1943, he pled his case to Hitler, arguing that the expulsions had triggered "indescribable panic" among the populace and "open rebellion" and thereby endangered regional contributions to the war economy.[220] Globocnik scoffed at such criticisms, though Himmler at least warmed to the prudence of a tactical retreat; that same month, he ordered the suspension of all "evacuations" in the General Government "until further notice" (they had actually stopped the previous March).[221] This halt turned out to be temporary, however, for there were still tens of thousands of ethnic German Umsiedler stuck in Łódź awaiting resettlement, and nowhere else to put them but Lublin.[222] Ever since the deportations began back in November 1942, Himmler had cleverly framed them as falling within the purview of his competency as generalissimo for the "combating of bandits"; in the summer of 1943, he invoked this power to muzzle Frank's objections and continue on as planned.[223] In other words, armed resistance caused by the expulsions in the first place became an excuse not only to push the SS agenda forward, but to expand it under the guise of anti-partisan warfare – in effect duplicating a paradigm originally introduced in Slovenia.

That June, police and security forces under the command of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski initiated Operation Wehrwolf, kicking off a new phase of the *Aktion Zamosc* that would turn much of the countryside into a barren wasteland. Reinforced by troops from the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS, these units proved far more effective at implementing wholesale land clearances than even the most seasoned technicians of the UWZ; they had already evicted 36,389 civilians by the end of August, though in many instances they simply razed the towns and villages in their path and slaughtered the inhabitants indiscriminately. Those who survived were funneled into an enlarged network of camps in and around the cities of Zamość and Lublin, where nearly all of them would either be press-ganged for forced labor in the Reich, shipped to the death camp at Majdanek, or shot. Meanwhile, Himmler's race and resettlement experts exploited the opportunity afforded by these counterinsurgency sweeps not only to install 5,144 colonists in the recently "vacated" areas, but to pick out 264 captives for entry into the Re-Germanization

[218] Zörner to Frank, February 23, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 201.

[219] NARA T-175/73/2590384: Krüger to Himmler, February 29, 1943; Fischer to Bühler, May 14, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 272. Also see Präg and Jacobmeyer, *Diensttagebuch*, 620.

[220] ITS 1.2.7.7.1/82177186-193: Frank to Hitler, May 25, 1943.

[221] NARA T-81/286/2409871-873: Krumey, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," May 1943. For Globocnik's reaction, see Winstone, *Dark Heart*, 198.

[222] NARA T-175/73/2590342: Himmler to Krüger, March 1943.

[223] LOC/NMT, 869-870, Doc. NO-2444: Himmler to Frank (English transcript), July 3, 1943.

Procedure.[224] That Krumey recorded a total of only 383 WED candidates from the "evacuated zones" of Lublin for the entirety of 1943 is a testament to the fact that SS functionaries had largely given up on adults and shifted their attention to extracting "bandit children of good blood." Indeed, between July 7 and August 25, 1943, during the peak months of Operation Wehrwolf, the Nazis transported 4,454 minors aged two to fourteen from Zamość to the Reich for the purposes of Germanization and adoption. It is unclear how many more followed them at later dates.[225]

Of course, none of this made the heterogeneous collection of "Germans" quartered in Lublin feel any safer; on the contrary, the explosion of inter-ethnic violence that erupted in 1943 underscored the failure of the Nazi regime to protect its own subjects.[226] As early as December of the preceding year, a group of Umsiedler from Bessarabia had already grown "so afraid to stay in the country that shortly after receiving their new homes they opted to escape to the towns."[227] That residents of the SS settler colonies lived in a state of perpetual anxiety can be seen in the large shipments of weapons and ammunition the Eignungsprüfer requested from Łódź – a sensible precaution given that the leader of EWZ Commission XV was assassinated by Polish paramilitaries in June 1943.[228] Even more disconcerting, the growing partisan menace deterred inhabitants from coming forward to sue for recognition as "persons of German descent." The Kreishauptmann of Biłgoraj counted only two new applicants during the month of June 1943 and credited this reduction to "widespread fears of harassment and terrorism on the part of the bandits."[229] RuSHA inspectors likewise detected "a certain nervousness" among families summoned to appear for a racial examination: "This is thoroughly understandable," one of them commented, "because many have been threatened by the resistance movement."[230] In such a poisonous atmosphere of mutual suspicion, it did not take long for even the more benevolent Nazi supervisors to turn on their erstwhile charges. In the wake of an attack on the village of Horyszów, one female activist accused local Deutschstämmige of conspiring with the insurgents, having heard that their counterparts in other parishes had often done the same.[231]

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[224] Globocnik to Brandt, July 1, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 290; ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82183014-033: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ," December 31, 1943. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 410-411; Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 130-131. As of March 1943, the Eignungsprüfer attached to the UWZ in Lublin no longer divided subjects according to the usual four-tier system due to the assumption that unrest stemmed primarily from the fear that those who fell into category RuS-IV would be treated like Jews, that is, exterminated. However, they did continue to select re-Germanizables for dispatch to the Old Reich; see NARA T-175/286/2409866-870: Krumey, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der UWZ Nebenstelle Lublin," August 21, 1943; Himmler to Krüger, March 3, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 213.

[225] See the introduction to Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, 14-15.

[226] Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 266-267.

[227] Klukowski, *Diary of the War Years*, 230-231.

[228] USHMMA 15.007M/8/10/147: Wendland to Globocnik, June 6, 1943; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 410.

[229] Kreishauptmann Bilgoraj to Zörner, July 5, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 298.

[230] BA R 69/601/91: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV, "Erfahrungsbericht für den Monat Mai 1943," June 1, 1943.

[231] Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 276-277.

This allegation was not completely baseless either – and that more than anything else highlighted not just the danger of assimilating foreigners who might be secret enemies, but the terrifying prospect of otherwise upstanding German citizens "going native" and mutating into "renegades." Thus we have the story of two Reich Germans, known to us only as Müller and Reichert, both of whom worked in some capacity for the municipal government in Lublin before being detailed to the village of Grabowiec to help bring in the harvest in the autumn of 1942. At some point during this time, for reasons unknown, Müller and Reichert went missing – only to reemerge months later as the chieftains of a "robber band" made up of Poles as well as ethnic German Umsiedler who had deserted their farmsteads.[232] It was one thing for people classified as Deutschstämmige to flee to the forests along with Polish neighbors targeted for expulsion, as they often did, or for resettlers to quit their frontier outposts in order to join the "bandits." The myth of "lost German blood" had inured Nazi officials to the likelihood of such contingencies, and more than a few high-ranking officers had actually predicted that this would happen (in the case of re-Germanizables from Slovenia, Alsace-Lorraine, and Luxembourg, for instance). But the actions of homegrown "ethnic comrades" like Müller and Reichert de-stabilized the entire psychological and structural edifice of Nazi racial imperialism to an unimaginable degree, suggesting that the goal of "consolidation" itself, and the cross-cultural encounters produced therefrom, fundamentally exposed Germans to the peril of dissolution, "de-Germanization," and "race suicide."

By the time Frank finally convinced Himmler to dismiss Globocnik and terminate the resettlement program in the late summer of 1943 (with crucial support from Ehlich and Bach-Zelewski), the final toll of destruction was enormous: more than one hundred thousand civilians had been displaced, hundreds of communities ruined or depopulated, and most of Lublin reduced to a smoldering, ungovernable warzone.[233] What began as a test-case for the transformation of Europe ended in utter catastrophe and pandemonium. With all that being said, it is important to balance these atrocities against the inclusive tenor of National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* in the General Government. Not only did the Nazis identify over one hundred thousand native Volksdeutsche, import an additional twenty one thousand from abroad, and place many of them in 126 new "German villages"; as of May 1944, they had screened at least 113,451 inhabitants and approved roughly half of them for integration into the "ethnic community" as "persons of German descent."[234] Although this ethnographic coup would be short-lived,

[232] Schutzpolizei Lublin to Gendarmerie Lublin, March 8, 1943, in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 225.

[233] On the circumstances surrounding Globocnik's removal from office, see the testimony of Johannes Müller in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 153, as well as Doc. 323: "Protokoll über eine Besprechung zwischen Frank und Bach-Zelewski," unsigned, August 2, 1943. Krumey listed a total of 9,771 deportees for 1942 and 40,837 for 1943, though these numbers only included persons whom the Nazis actually apprehended; see ITS 1.2.7.7.24/82183014-033: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ," December 31, 1943; BA R 75/9/26-33: Krumey, "Bericht über die Arbeit der UWZ Zweigstelle Zamosc," December 31, 1942. Czesław Madajczyk estimates that over 60,000 natives fled their homes in the period from 1942 to 1944; see the introduction to *Sonderlaboratorium*, 15.

[234] A catalogue of these villages can be found in Madajczyk, *Sonderlaboratorium*, Doc. 358: "Verzeichnis der von den Deutschen besiedelten Dörfer in den Kreisen Zamosc, Hrubieszow, Bilgoraj, und Tomaszow," August 1943. Andreas Strippel

built as it was upon rank criminality and the boundless misery of others, it nonetheless constitutes a telling barometer of the interdependence between center and periphery when viewed in tandem with the ongoing mandate of racial reclamation on the domestic front. It was not just that popular engagement at home encouraged the expansion of Germanization policy abroad; the same nexus also produced situational commonalities that linked social practices of classification and assimilation inside and outside the metropole as they developed together simultaneously. In each setting, the active involvement of civilians in the "consolidation of Germandom" rent fissures within the fabric of the Nazi cosmology, as the porousness of geographical barriers began to mirror the fluid boundary between German and non-German in a manner that rendered such distinctions almost meaningless. And yet, the "hunt for good blood" never collapsed under the weight of its own staggering contradictions, not even when the war ultimately came home to Germany. Indeed, it would continue on, formally and informally, right up until the downfall of the Third Reich.

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cites an overall total of 21,000 Umsiedler, though there is considerable confusion over where these people actually came from; see *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 203. Inventories for VoMi camps in the Warthegau from March 1943 indicate the presence of subjects from Volhynia, Galicia, Bialystok, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Russia, though Himmler himself complained to Greifelt in December 1942 about the imprecision of RKF statistics, and most of the index material on groups earmarked for colonization in Lublin either did not survive the war or has yet to be discovered. Although we know for certain that a majority of the people settled in the area came from southeastern Europe, it is also unclear whether the SS actually followed through with the intention to transplant re-Germanizables from Slovenia, Alsace-Lorraine, and Luxembourg, let alone with the idea to bring in "Germanic" settlers from other regions in Western and Northern Europe. If they did, the numbers must have been minimal; see Wasser, *Raumplanung*, 193-194, 198. As of February 1943, the EWZ commissions had identified and screened 103,278 Volksdeutsche from the General Government; see USHMMA 15.007M/8/103/102-133: Gottstein to Ehlich, February 10, 1943. Isabel Heinemann puts the amount of individuals examined for consideration as Deutschstämmige at 113,451 for the years 1942-1943; see *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 399. HSSPF Krüger similarly noted in the summer of 1943 that almost 100,000 non-German natives had been registered, presumably in Lublin and Galicia, while Greifelt mentioned in May 1944 that the EWZ had classified nearly 50,000 of them as Deutschstämmige (groups A and B); see BA NS 19/3662/56-59: Krüger to Brandt, July 20, 1943; BA R 186/35: Greifelt to HSSPFs, May 26, 1944. Elizabeth Harvey has also uncovered a numerical chart for the General Government from 1944 with an entry listing approximately 50,000 Deutschstämmige; see *Woman and the Nazi East*, 79.

Chapter Ten: Until the Last Drop

"From fanaticism to barbarism is only one step."

–Denis Diderot

Georg Rödel would not abandon his post, even as the world he knew was falling apart all around him. A veteran of virtually every major SS resettlement operation in occupied Europe, he had spent the bulk of the Second World War plying his trade as a devoted and conscientious race examiner – first in western Poland, then in Slovenia, and then in France, before rising to the position of RuS-Führer for SS-District Rhine-Westmark in October 1943. He had even served for a time as head of the Re-Germanization Department within the RuSHA Race Office, coordinating the WED from a station of high importance in Berlin. By the dawn of 1945, however, all that seemed like it had happened a lifetime ago. The U.S. Third Army lay coiled just across the river from Rödel's office in Wiesbaden, lobbing artillery shells into the city on an almost daily basis, reducing large sections of the city to rubble, and making it nearly impossible for the RuS-Führer to get any work done. With round-the-clock Allied air raids and the death and destruction left in their wake, staying abreast of his self-appointed tasks in the surrounding countryside proved to be equally daunting, as he scurried from bomb shelter to bomb shelter, town to town, performing as many racial examinations as he could (primarily on forced laborers from the Soviet Union) before the final day of reckoning arrived. But Rödel was not deterred by any of this, nor did he despair at the nigh certainty of German defeat. Actually, he was looking ahead to the future, not dwelling in the past. "Soon it will all be over," he wrote to a friend, "and then there will be a lot of work to catch up on. I hope and expect that it will not take too long. Here we are thoroughly optimistic."[1]

It is a commonly held view that, outside of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," the National Socialist regime suspended its pursuit of radical demographic change once the tide of the Second World War turned against Germany. After the disastrous defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, we are told, "military misfortunes required that ideologues all over Europe, even Himmler, put their Germanization plans on hold," as "maintaining domestic peace and industrial productivity became paramount."[2] This reversal ostensibly corresponded to a broader pattern in which racial objectives could only be justified when victory loomed just over the horizon, whereas the waning of German fortunes dictated greater

[1] BDC/SSO38B: Personnel File on Georg Albert Rödel. See his activity reports and correspondence from early 1945 in HstaW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359. Also see Matthias Hamann, "Erwünscht und unerwünscht. Die rassenpsychologische Selektion der Ausländer," in *Herrenmensch und Arbeitsvölker. Ausländische Arbeiter und Deutsche 1939-1945*, eds. Jochen August et. al. (Berlin: Rothbuch, 1989), 153-154.

[2] Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 175.

deference to purely economic, political, and strategic concerns.[3] The final chapter of this study offers a different take, one which does not flat out deny that such a reorientation occurred at least in part, but does seek to convey another side of the story that historians have almost entirely neglected or forgotten to mention. As Georg Rödel's tenacity and undaunted enthusiasm suggest, the Nazis could and indeed did imagine a world without Nazism, and many endeavored mightily to leave behind a bequest to the German people that would endure into the aftermath of the war, chasing a silver lining on the dark cloud that ominously portended the demise of the empire they had so rapidly built and lost. The retreat of German armies and the impending collapse of the Third Reich did not bring a halt to racial consolidation; rather, they triggered a frantic bid to harness and store up as much "lost German blood" as humanly possible. To relate the unfolding of this commission in all its drama and complexity, we must start at the beginning of the end, at the apogee and furthest extent of the Nazis' imperium over Europe. With that aim in mind, the present chapter follows the trail of the "hunt for good blood" into the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, then shifts westward and circles around the continent to cover the last surge of National Socialist Germanization policy abroad before examining its denouement within the contracting borders of the Reich itself.

When German divisions invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the race and resettlement experts followed right behind them. As early as July 11, Himmler had tasked the VoMi with registering the ethnic German communities strewn across the borderlands of the old Russian Empire and managing their subsequent welfare. The first point of contact with the SS, however, would be the Einsatzgruppen, the paramilitary death squads sent in on the heels of the Wehrmacht advance to murder Jews and other "racial-political enemies" – a seemingly strange choice of envoys that can be explained by several factors. For one thing, there was considerable overlap between the personnel who comprised these formations and the agencies that fell under the umbrella of the RKFDV. The original director of the EWZ, Martin Sandberger, became the leader of Sonderkommando 1a in Einsatzgruppe A, while the former head of the RuSHA Aussenstelle in Łódź, Fritz Schwalm, likewise served under HSSPF Friedrich Jeckeln, the commander of police and security forces in the Baltic. Each Einsatzgruppe also possessed a team of "ethnicity specialists" drawn from the ranks of the VoMi and the EWZ (the latter had always been subordinate to the SD in any case). Using these units made sense on logistical grounds too: their assignment to comb through the POW camps and pick out "undesirables" for execution simultaneously enabled them to identify ethnic German prisoners and release them from captivity. But there was another, much darker and more macabre reason for deploying the Einsatzgruppen as the forward operators of racial reclamation in the U.S.S.R.: although only rarely acknowledged, in addition to Jews, Soviet

[3] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 177.

political commissars, and "Asiatics," they also routinely shot native Volksdeutsche suspected of being communists (mayors, schoolteachers, and collective farm managers, for instance).[4] Just as the SS targeted Soviet Jews for immediate extermination out of the belief that these people formed the leadership class of the Bolshevik system, so they aimed to wipe out members of the intelligentsia whose "lost German blood" supposedly rendered them equally as dangerous, if not more. In the Soviet Union, almost no effort would be expended to bring "renegades" back into the fold.

The Nazis had never contented themselves with the "recovery" of Volksdeutsche, of course, nor would they start now, though the number of non-Germans they intended to assimilate in the western territories of the Soviet Union dwarfed everything projected for other areas of Europe by far. According to the drafters of the General Plan for the East, somewhere on the order of fourteen million "ethnic aliens" from this region would come into question for Germanization (in situ or in the Reich) on the basis of their "racial substance and cultural development." But these figures were still "purely theoretical," in the words of Nazi Party ideologue Eberhard Wetzel, now ensconced as a consultant within Alfred Rosenberg's Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (or Ostministerium). Nothing in the way of concrete preparations could begin, he advised, until after the enactment of a "thorough investigation of the peoples living in the East" that would supply the intelligence necessary to "avert an influx of racially alien blood from non-European peoples" and gather together "all those families that exhibit the characteristics of the Nordic-Dinaric race in their external appearance and behavior."[5] With this objective in mind, Otto Hofmann and Bruno K. Schultz embarked on a tour of the "newly won eastern territories" in late September 1941 so as to "become acquainted with the quality of the people living there." In the course of this trip, they also stopped in Kiev, Mogilev, and Riga to establish RuSHA outposts with the HSSPFs headquartered there (one for each of the three German army groups: North, Center, and South). "We have thus laid the groundwork," Hofmann informed Himmler a short time later, "for the implementation of precise inquiries, similar to those already introduced in the Warthegau and the General Government, with the goal of detecting valuable blood."[6] Wrapped up in the heady atmosphere that coalesced in the midst of spectacular military victories against the Red Army, the ebullient agency chief let his imagination run wild with new schemes: "There are 17,000 refugees to examine in Reval [Tallinn], among others," he told

[4] Andreas Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik und die Neuordnung Europas. Rassenpolitische Selektion der Einwandererzentralstelle des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1939-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 199, 251; Ingeborg Fleischhauer and Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans: Past and Present* (New York: Hurst, 1986), 73fn, 75, 84, 98; Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 207; Eric C. Steinhart , *The Holocaust and the Germanization of Ukraine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 102.

[5] Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, ed. Czesław Madajczyk (Munich: Saur, 1994), Doc. 16. Although he worked out these ideas with Bruno K. Schultz and other RuSHA officials, Wetzel thought their methodology would be too restrictive and pressed for a more "generous" model.

[6] BAL B 162/26344/81-83: Hofmann to Himmler, October 4, 1941.

a colleague that October, "Surveys are also urgently necessary in the Ukraine, where valuable blood is located in scattered settlements; the same goes for White Russia [Belarus]." He even plotted an expedition to the far-off mountains of the Caucasus, with Schwalm at its helm.[7] The Reichsführer-SS outlined fantasies of the future that were even more sweeping and megalomaniacal. Within twenty years, he predicted, a string of "German settlement pearls" would stretch from the Don to the Volga, then extend onward up to the Urals, incubating a "seedbed of Germanic blood" sown to spawn hundreds of millions of Germans over the next several centuries. Yet before this triumphant vision could be attained, it was first necessary to reverse the systematic policy of racial mixing allegedly pursued by the Soviets and "extract everyone of good race from the area."[8]

The earliest concrete project geared toward fulfilling this prophecy originated with another enthusiastic RuSHA official; Hofmann was not the only one brimming over with ideas, after all. In mid-July 1941, the RuS-Führer for Upper Silesia, Walter Scholtz, suggested that the Eignungsprüfer should screen ethnic Russians found among the throngs of incoming Soviet POWs in order to "obtain a clear percentile overview of Russia's racial structure," cull those deemed "racially valuable" for Germanization, and eradicate all "Asiatics" and "indefinable mixed types."[9] Hofmann told Scholtz such an undertaking would be "premature" given the small sample size (!), though he did promise to bring his proposal to the attention of the Reichsführer-SS.[10] Although Himmler's actual response is unknown, something very similar to what Scholtz envisaged got underway several months later. That winter, with full cooperation from the Wehrmacht, a team of examiners from the RuSHA and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology started performing evaluations in the make-shift camps built to house Soviet POWs; they would last until the spring of 1943 and encompass no less than forty-two thousand prisoners. This initiative confirmed preconceptions about the "amorphous nature of the Russian racial mélange," yet also revealed "much stronger Nordic elements among the Russians than has previously been supposed" – a discovery that frightened Nazi officials as much as it excited them. According to the man who directed the study, Professor Wolfgang Abel, the radical policies of industrialization and collectivization launched by Stalin in the 1930s would never have succeeded without the leadership capabilities of a Germanic upper class. He therefore warned that "the proliferation of a Nordic blood component" within the Soviet body politic, when combined with the presumed hyper-fecundity of Slavic nationalities, constituted an "exceptional threat to the future of our *Volk*" that would lead to "another war in the East in twenty-five or thirty years" unless the National Socialist regime chose one of two options: "Either the extirpation of the

[7] Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 422, 691.

[8] BA NS 19/4009/128-178: Himmler, "Rede in Zhytomyr," September 16, 1942. Also see Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (London: Knopf, 1991), 112-113.

[9] BA NS 2/79/118-120: Scholtz to Hofmann, July 18, 1941;

[10] BA NS 2/79/117: Hofmann to Scholtz, undated [summer 1941].

Russian people, or the Germanization of its Nordic stratum." Wetzel championed the latter prescription: "We can only protect the interests of subsequent generations if we remove these racially kindred Nordic clans and Germanize them. It would be matter of a few million people, but they are far more dangerous to us than the lethargic, primitive masses… These clans cannot remain in Russia… They must instead be resettled to closed German territories in the Reich."[11] Here we once again see the apocalyptic imagery of older cultural myths and demographic anxieties exerting a direct impact on how the Nazis conceived of the Second World War, with the topos of the Slavic Flood pervading hallucinations of a barbaric alien host rallied by Germanic overlords to obliterate Western civilization.

Existing evidence does not disclose what happened to POWs whom Abel and his assistants judged favorably (those whom they rejected most likely perished in the camps), though there is more than enough documentation to prove that the SS did attempt to Germanize large numbers of Soviet civilians, young women and children in particular. As discussed in Chapter Four, ever since late 1940 the RKF and RuSHA had endeavored mightily to enlist "re-Germanizable" Polish girls for work as domestic servants on the home front, though by late 1942 Himmler had grown increasingly unhappy with the paltry results and chastised Greifelt for having "in no way adequately or satisfactorily dealt with this issue."[12] Around that same time, RuSHA personnel stationed in Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics set up shop in the offices of the Reich Labor Ministry and began selecting "racially suitable" female draftees for the same purpose (Himmler had already authorized recruitment from the Soviet Union in October 1941).[13] This new venture differed substantially from those of its forerunner. Although the Eignungsprüfer still sought out candidates whose "racial phenotype comes as close as possible to the ideal image of the German people," they relaxed their standards in order to boost the overall yield with subjects deemed "racially tolerable" or "average" (RuS-III). Because they did not formally enter the Re-Germanization Procedure, these "eastern female domestic workers" (all in all about fifty thousand of them) were relegated to a lower tier in the social pyramid once they arrived in Germany. Although entitled to comparatively reasonable allotments of food and clothing, Gestapo guidelines regulating their treatment instructed employers "to maintain a necessary distance" and prevent them from cultivating "feelings of solidarity" with German housemaids.[14]

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[11] Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost*, Doc. 16. Also see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 533-535. Abel's conclusions stood in stark contrast to the viewpoint articulated in *Mein Kampf*, where Hitler similarly attributed the rise of the Tsarist Empire to an aristocracy of "Nordic blood," yet believed this elite had been destroyed and replaced by Jews during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1918; see *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), 388-389.

[12] BA NS 19/150/59: Himmler to Brandt, February 11, 1943.

[13] ITS 5.1.114/82330758: Sauckel, "Sonderaktion zur Hereinholung von Ostarbeiterinnen zugunsten kinderreicher städtischer und ländlicher Haushaltungen," September 8, 1942; BA NS 2/81/2-5: Bauer to Klinger, October 25, 1942; BA NS 2/91/95-96: Buchs to Hofmann, July 19, 1942; BA R 49/73/66-67: Himmler, "Anordnung 51/I," October 1, 1941.

[14] BA NS 47/31: Müller, "Zweiter Nachtrag zu Abschnitt A der Allgemeinen Bestimmungen über Anwerbung und Einsatz von Arbeitskräften aus dem Osten vom 20.2.1942," September 10, 1942. This document contained its own informational leaflet for employers. Also see Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 439fn; Mareike Witkowski, "In untergeordneter Stellung.

It is hard to escape the impression that the inspiration for these harsher strictures stemmed from the dreadful experiences and consequently rebellious behavior of young female WED candidates. On the other hand, Himmler never really abandoned the original Hausgehilfinnen program either. As late as the summer of 1944, the Aussenstelle was still shipping "re-Germanizable" Polish girls to the Reich and holding out hope that "future conditions [will] allow for larger deployments of female laborers as housemaids."[15]

As the race and resettlement experts roamed the vast expanses of the Soviet heartland, they also devoted much of their energy to tracking down "racially valuable youths." In the summer of 1941, Himmler entrusted the welfare of ethnic German orphans to Guntram Pflaum, a veteran operative of Lebensborn and the RuSHA. The priority must have shifted to non-Germans at some point during the following year, for by July 1942 Pflaum had set up a special children's home in Bobruisk that housed thirty-five Belarusian "foundlings" whom he had personally cherry-picked for Germanization.[16] It seems that he established other similar institutions in the rear area of Army Group Center before moving his remaining charges westward in 1943.[17] HSSPF Jeckeln received a commission to do the same thing in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and western Belarus (jointly administered as the Reichskommissariat Ostland under Hinrich Lohse), though in his case the Reichsführer-SS at first specified the "reclamation" of children whose parents had been shot or deported by Stalin's secret police.[18] This constraint soon fell by the wayside. Despite strident objections from Lohse, who worried that abductions would provoke widespread unrest and jeopardize security behind the front, Greifelt expanded the writ of Ordinance 67/I to cover all of the Baltic countries in May 1942, effectively granting SS functionaries the same freedom to kidnap local children which their counterparts in the Warthegau already enjoyed.[19] By then, Jeckeln and his SD underlings had amassed a total of 5,107 "orphans" from almost every major city in the region, nearly all of whom underwent a racial examination conducted by Schwalm.[20]

His colleagues were active in this capacity in Ukraine as well, likewise spurred on by Himmler, who spelled out his expectations in provocatively blunt, all-or-nothing language in September 1942: "With all of the peoples in our grasp – be they Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, etc. – each distilled drop of pure blood must be assimilated or extinguished… The racially valuable children are to be removed from

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Hausgehilfinnen im Nationalsozialismus," in *Ungleichheiten im 'Dritten Reich'. Semantiken, Praktiken, Erfahrungen*, eds. Nicole Kramer and Armin Nolzen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 167.

[15] BA NS 19/150/63: Hintze, "Aktenvermerk betr. eindeutschungsfähige Hausgehilfinnen," June 1, 1944.

[16] BA NS 2/91/92-96: Buchs to Hofmann, July 19, 1942.

[17] BA NS 19/1436/15: Kaltenbrunner to Himmler, March 5, 1943. Also see Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weissrussland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999), 1081-1082.

[18] BA NS 19/2216/6: Jeckeln to Himmler, June 13, 1942.

[19] BA NS 19/2216/3-4: Lohse to Jeckeln, April 12, 1942; NS 19/2216/1-2: Greifelt to Himmler, May 13, 1942.

[20] BA NS 19/2216/6: Jeckeln to Himmler, June 13, 1942; BA NS 19/1436/15: Kaltenbrunner to Himmler, March 5, 1943; BA NS 19/2216/1-2: Greifelt to Himmler, May 13, 1942.

their mothers and brought to Germany… so that they grow up as conscious bearers of their blood and dutiful citizens of the Greater Germanic Reich."[21] A month later, the RuS-Führer in Kiev, Richard Schill, hammered out an arrangement whereby the SD would corral "parentless children" from the city and the surrounding countryside for him to peruse.[22] Beginning in March 1943, the Nazis transferred these youngsters to Germany, assembled them in "collection homes" run by Lebensborn or the NSV, and then handed them over to private households.[23] As with the seizure of "bandit children" during anti-partisan operations, such measures convey a firm link between the assumption that some "bearers of lost German blood" lay beyond the pale as well as the perceived exigency of appropriating their offspring. The senior SD commander on the ground in Ukraine even maintained that trying to assimilate anyone over the age of six would be futile "because the vengeful hatred of the older children can no longer be expunged."[24]

Himmler and his acolytes were not the only ones terrified by the prospect of "German blood" falling into the hands of the Bolshevik nemesis. Like their comrades in Western and Northern Europe, Wehrmacht officers stationed on the Eastern Front repeatedly expressed alarm over the demographic consequences of sexual relations between German soldiers and native women.[25] As a solution to this "problem," the deputy chief within the General Staff of Army Group Center, Colonel Georg von Unold, recommended the same course of action then being practiced in Norway and the Netherlands: "From the perspective of 'biological warfare', the question is if and when these children can be relocated to Germany."[26] Rosenberg elaborated what Unold meant by "biological warfare": "If Germans engage in sexual relations with ethnically alien women, we must prevent a German blood-flow from infusing the foreign peoples of the East with children conceived from these extramarital affairs, as well as prevent the German people from squandering valuable human resources."[27] Himmler met with Hofmann and Hilgenfeldt in September 1942 to formulate a system for registering and accommodating such children. It took the two agencies more than a year to cobble together the necessary resources, but once they did, Hitler gave them the go-ahead on October 11, 1943. In subsequent months, army officers and district commissars began reporting the names and locations of all "children born out of wedlock to German soldiers" to the RuSHA, which then evaluated them along with their mothers, while the NSV oversaw the

[21] BA NS 19/4009/128-178: Himmler, Rede in Zhytomyr, September 16, 1942.
[22] BA NS 2/81/2-5: Bauer, "Arbeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.-15. Oktober," October 15, 1942.
[23] BA NS 19/1436: Brandt to Kaltenbrunner, March 15, 1943. Also see Georg Lilienthal, *Der "Lebensborn e.V.". Ein Instrument nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1985), 221.
[24] ITS 1.1.0.2.14/82342266-268: "Übersicht über bisherige Anordnungen betr. Bandenkinderunterbringung," unsigned, July 13, 1943.
[25] Regina Mühlhäuser, "Between Extermination and Germanization: Children of German in the 'Occupied Eastern Territories,' 1942-1945," in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, eds. Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen (New York: Berg, 2005), 167.
[26] Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1081.
[27] BA R 90/380: Rosenberg to Lohse, October 9, 1942.

"care and education" of those declared "racially fit."[28] Of course, the absurdly high extrapolations initially foretold by observers turned out to be way off the mark, rooted as they were in fantasies of German virility rather than objective data. Reminiscent of attitudes regarding female populations elsewhere, Nazi leaders also adopted the viewpoint that only women of dubious "biological quality" would engage in sexual intercourse with the enemy, all the while fearing that the Soviets had taken advantage of their "generosity" by passing off "substandard" infants as "half-Germans" in order to weaken the *Volk*.[29] Nevertheless, by the time the Wehrmacht retreated from the territories of the Soviet Union in 1944, the Germans had assumed custody of well over ten thousand "war babies" – a remarkable sign of the extent to which the myth of "lost German blood" captivated even relatively moderate figures within the military.[30]

Despite this emphasis on children, the Nazis had certainly not given up their attempt to assimilate adults. Indeed, in the borderlands of Reichskommissariat Ostland, they had wide-ranging designs on the indigenous population as a whole, even if they did not always agree on how many inhabitants would qualify for admission into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. At the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin, Hans Ehlich speculated that about one-fourth of all Belarusians possessed a "Nordic admixture" sufficient enough to warrant favor, though the RuSHA reckoned with figures as high as seventy percent and the department heads of the RKF Staff Main Office could not even reach consensus on an appropriate ratio. None of them disputed the position of the Interior Ministry, however, that this ethnic group in particular would be easy to Germanize given the absence of a fully-formed intelligentsia.[31] Nor did they react with surprise when provincial administrators in western Belarus frequently commented on the large number of blond-haired, blue-eyed natives they encountered in the course of official business.[32] Having routinely come across individuals whom "one might assume hailed from Schleswig-Holstein or Lower Saxony," Wetzel was convinced that the Belarusians (or "White Ruthenians," as the Germans often referred to them) had "preserved" an abundance of "pure Nordic types." In his estimation, "These racially valuable families must be Germanized as soon as possible… It is urgently necessary to seek out Nordic types among the White Ruthenians and bring them to the Reich, where they must be designated as 're-

[28] BA NS 2/71/24-25: Hofmann to Ehlich, October 23, 1943; BA NS 19/2427/3-4: Hilgenfeldt to Bormann, September 16, 1942; BA R 6/183: Hitler, "Erlass über die Betreuung der unehelichen Kinder von Deutschen in den besetzten Ostgebieten," October 11, 1943. Also see Mühlhäuser, "Between Extermination and Germanization," 175.

[29] BA NS 19/4009/128-178: Himmler, "Rede in Zhytomyr," September 16, 1942; BA R 6/383/127-128: Himmler, "Geheimer Vermerk betr. Erfassung von unehelichen Kindern in den besetzten Ostgebieten," July 4, 1944. Also see Regina Mühlhäuser, "Between 'Racial Awareness' and Fantasies of Potency: Nazi Sexual Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union, 1943-1945," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 211; Mühlhäuser, "Between Extermination and Germanization," 168, 171.

[30] Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1081. It is estimated that around 10,000 children of Wehrmacht soldiers and Soviet women ended up in NSV institutions in the Reich; see Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 598-599.

[31] ITS 5.1.113/82328364-373: "Nuremburg Tribunal Report on the Wartime Activities of Wilhelm Stuckart," unsigned, April 12, 1949.

[32] Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 100.

Germanizables' just like the Germanizable Poles and treated accordingly."[33] The Nazi leadership ultimately decided to leave the Belarusians where they were (except for those dragooned as forced laborers) pending a future census of their "racial characteristics," though it appears that some did wind up in Germany in the manner advocated by Wetzel. According to Christian Gerlach, the foremost expert on the wartime occupation of Belarus, it is also possible that Germanization measures were introduced for inhabitants who remained in this region as well, most likely by the VoMi, which had a significant presence on the ground.[34]

The situation was somewhat different to the north in the Baltic lands of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, where the Nazis conjured up a racial hierarchy stratified by nationality and geography. Before his death, SS security chief Reinhard Heydrich had mused that "The best racial elements are found among the Estonians, because of the Swedish influence; then come the Latvians, with the Lithuanians being the worst of all." Himmler concurred with his factotum's schematic breakdown, interpreting historical ties that linked several major Baltic port cities to the Hanseatic League as indisputable evidence of earlier Germanic predominance. He told Greifelt in May 1942 that, outside of some "inferior elements" in the eastern half of the country, the Estonians were "for the most part racially superior and capable of Germanization"; in his view, they numbered among "the few ethnic groups with whom we could mix without incurring any damage to ourselves" (he mentioned Slovaks and Walloons as additional examples).[35] During a meeting with other Nazi principals at Vinnytsia in August of that year, he also announced plans to "absorb" up to half of the Latvians and all Latgalians (an ancient Baltic tribe, allies of medieval Saxon crusaders and ancestors of modern Latvians, which actually no longer existed). For the Lithuanians, however, the Reichsführer-SS had nothing but scorn: "There is no possibility of Germanizing [them], as they are incredibly dim-witted and contain an extraordinary amount of Slavic blood." Fellow attendees offered unanimous support for Himmler's agenda, though given the extreme levels of violence and rapacity with which Lohse governed the Ostland, some were also quick to point out that "the racially valuable segment of a people cannot be won over if it is systematically pillaged."[36] This was something Wetzel emphasized as well. Always full of opinions, he pressed for an even more expansive policy line in the Baltic littoral, arguing that indigenous nationalities could be incorporated into

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[33] Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost*, Doc. 16.

[34] Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 93. Also see Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 117, 121. Nazi authorities in Bezirk Bialystok, administered separately by Erich Koch, definitely did embark on a program to Germanize the Belarusian minority there, some of whom may have ended up in the Reich; see BA R 49/2546: Stier to Himmler, December 1, 1943. Administrators in Bialystok also started accepting applications for ethnic German status in 1942, though only 771 had signed up as of February 1943. It seems that many of them were Polish-speakers who worked for the Germans in one capacity or another; see Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1944* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1987), 519.

[35] BA NS 19/2743/142-146: Greifelt, "Vermerk zum Vortrag beim RFSS," May 28, 1942.

[36] ITS 5.1.113/82328364-373: "Nuremburg Tribunal Report on the Wartime Activities of Wilhelm Stuckart," unsigned, April 12, 1949.

Germandom almost without exception. Reducing these groups to little more than chattel, as he saw it, would essentially guarantee that "German blood once again becomes cultural fertilizer for the demographically stronger peoples of the East," while the horrors of daily life in the occupied Soviet Union and the need for educated personnel on the home front provided all the more reason to resettle them in Germany: "Who is to say that an Estonian magistrate and his family cannot be granted the same station in the Reich? Why should a racially valuable Latvian railway technician not be transferred to an office in Hamburg or Bremen? Think of all the lawyers here who are more or less unprofitable, of all the teachers and the like. Can we not also create sufficient homes for them in the Reich?" For those who remained, Wetzel cited the Hungarians' successful "Magyarization" of minority communities under the Habsburg Dual Monarchy as a model to emulate, summing up his preferred approach with the following rule of thumb: "The inhabitants of these lands must recognize that they can only make something of themselves and obtain a respectable status if they become Germans."[37]

Nevertheless, neither he nor Himmler could convert these reveries into action, at least not in the form or to the degree they anticipated.[38] Although it seems that Schwalm conducted a fair amount of anthropometric research on the population of Estonia, the Eignungsprüfer did not perform nearly as many examinations on local non-Germans in the Reichskommissariat Ostland as they did in places like Poland or Slovenia.[39] But that does not mean they ignored the Baltic peoples as potential candidates for re-Germanization. In early 1941, before the launch of Operation Barbarossa, the SS had organized the transport of around fifty thousand supposed Volksdeutsche from Soviet-controlled Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to VoMi camps in Saxony, Mecklenburg, Thuringia, and Franconia.[40] When the EWZ started screening these "late resettlers" (*Nachumsiedler*), it turned out that many were actually "ethnic aliens" who had signed up for relocation to Germany in order to escape the clutches of Stalin's secret police, the infamous NKVD (as had many actual ethnic Germans).[41] In August 1941, therefore, Himmler ordered subordinates to consider such persons "who express a wish to stay in the Old Reich" for entry into the Re-Germanization Procedure. In the following months, VoMi officials began passing on all "questionable cases" to the local RuS-Führer, who carried out another evaluation of the applicants to determine if any "racial, medical, or other concerns" prohibited their "retention" and then forwarded the proceedings for

[37] Wetzel, "Bericht über eine Besprechung beim Reichsministerium für den besetzten Ostgebiete über die Frage der Eindeutschung," in M adajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost*, Doc. 9; Wetzel, "Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des RFSS," April 27, 1942, in Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost*, Doc. 16.

[38] Longerich, *Himmler*, 678.

[39] ITS 1.2.7.20.8/82356396-400: Schwalm, "Der rassische Bestand des estnischen Volkes und die politischen Voraussetzungen der Eindeutschungsfähigkeit," undated; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 438.

[40] ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82342891-892: Greifelt, "Zulassung zur Baltennachumsiedlung," January 11, 1941; ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82342895: Greifelt, "Ansetzung von Nachumsiedlern aus Estland und Lettland," April 16, 1941. Also see Harry Stossun, *Die Umsiedlungen der Deutschen aus Litauen während des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Untersuchungen zum Schicksal einer deutschen Volksgruppe im Osten* (Hamburg: Herder-Institut, 1990), 149-160.

[41] See Greifelt's correspondence with Himmler from May to September 1941 in BA R 49/2820; USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/55: Klinger, "Aktenvermerk des Rassenamts III/2," undated.

those who met with approval to the RKF and the responsible HSSPF.[42] By February 1942, Greifelt could report that around 100 of these "Baltic refugee families" constituted a "desirable infusion of blood" (the RuSHA counted a total of 2,264 individuals in September), which obligated state and Party offices to treat them "in accordance with the same guidelines already issued for other re-Germanizables."[43] Before long, WED candidates from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started popping up in private households all over Germany; thirteen resided in Bavaria as of April 1942, while the inventory for Westphalia listed fifty-two of them in October 1943.[44]

All the same, the internal workings of this venture brought to light a conceptual glitch that had already muddled the definition of Germanness in occupied Europe for some time. It was not so much that Nazi functionaries were disappointed with the overall "biological quality" of ethnic Germans and re-Germanizables; the problem lay in telling them apart. One RuSHA inspector who vetted a contingent of Nachumsiedler quartered in Leipzig claimed that most hewed very closely to the "Nordic ideal" and would "adapt relatively quickly to social conditions in the Reich, though he also observed disturbing "symptoms" (short noses, for instance), which seemed to "suggest the characteristics of the East-Baltic race may have prevailed in the contest of hereditary transmission." The examiner also admitted that he had been unable to ascertain any tactile features with which to distinguish Volksdeutsche from "ethnic aliens."[45] This was not an isolated issue; Greifelt complained that EWZ commissions in other Gaue had also often lumped the two categories together by labeling ethnic Germans as Balts and vice versa.[46] The fact that these people had declined to take part in the first cycle of resettlement actions and come "home to the Reich" in 1939-1940 also cast them under a heavy pall of suspicion.[47] Much like what went on in Lublin and Galicia, the Eignungsprüfer charged with classifying Nachumsiedler in Germany responded to the inherent complexities of national self-identification by doing something they were not supposed to do: conflate ethnic and racial criteria. If they refused to accept that race did not dictate behavior, then the only corollary was to assume that "inferior traits" had overshadowed the power of "German blood." It was this contention that informed the "exclusion procedure" from the get-go; it also illuminates why Himmler directed the SD to arrest Nachumsiedler deemed "asocial" or "criminally inclined" as well as why the

[42] BA R 186/32: Himmler, "Anordnung 43/AS," August 4, 1941; ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82342893: Greifelt, "Überprüfung von baltendeutschen Flüchtlinge," August 14, 1941.

[43] BA NS 49/73/98-100: Greifelt to Heydrich, Lorenz, Hofmann, and HSSPFs, February 6, 1942; BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942; BA R 186/1: "Anlage zum Erlass I-5/1," unsigned, July 12, 1941.

[44] BA R 49/3563/5: "Eindeutschungsfähige Baltenflüchtlinge im Gebiete des HSSPF Süd," unsigned, April, 1942; LNWD Reg. Aachen, Br. 0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 32: Gutenberger to Finanzamt Aachen, October 15, 1943.

[45] BA R 69/602/269: "Bericht über die rassische Zusammensetzung der Baltennachumsiedler," sig. illegible, May 7, 1942.

[46] ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82342893: Greifelt, "Überprüfung von baltendeutschen Flüchtlinge," August 14, 1941.

[47] Alexa Stiller, "Zwischen Zwangsgermanisierung und Fünfter Kolonne. Volksdeutsche als Häftlinge und Bewacher in den Konzentrationslagern," in *Nationalsozialistische Lager. Neue Beiträge zur NS-Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik und zur Gedenkstättenpädogogik*, eds. Akim Jah, Christoph Kopke, and Alexander Korb (Münster: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2006), 110.

police had already dispatched 253 of them to concentration camps as of July 1941.[48] The argument here is not just that the elusive aura of hybridity surrounding people like the Nachumsiedler highlighted the fluid boundary between German and non-German. Each phenomena also exposed the reality that very little actually separated Volksdeutsche from re-Germanizables (or Deutschstämmige in the case of the General Government), which in turn meant that both groups required a robust program of assimilation.

Nowhere was this strange brew of factors more evident than in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, which ironically became the focal point of Germanization policy in the Soviet Union because so many ethnic Germans lived there – or at least had. In the wake of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in 1939, the Nazis themselves had pulled out over two hundred thousand Volksdeutsche from Stalin's sphere of influence, the bulk of them from within the expanded borders of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic. After the onset of Operation Barbarossa, the NKVD deported as many as seven hundred thousand more to remote sites in Siberia and Kazakhstan. These expulsions hit ethnic Germans in Ukraine particularly hard. Nazi planners expected to find around fifty thousand Volksdeutsche in the "Gothic" Crimea, yet when German troops marched in, they discovered little but ghostly remnants of the once proud diasporic communities whose origins stretched back to the reign of Catherine the Great. The almost total disappearance of Germans from their historical zones of settlement in Ukraine formed the backdrop against which rival Nazi factions would stake competing claims to preeminence and push to salvage every drop of "German blood" that remained.[49]

The first such enterprise was organized by Rosenberg's incipient Ostministerium in advance of the invasion and led by Professor Karl Stumpp, a geographer and *völkisch* activist who grew up in the Black Sea region before fleeing the Bolsheviks in 1918. In the summer of 1941, Stumpp's team began searching village by village, house by house, interviewing local denizens and having them fill out "racial questionnaires" with the intent of composing a census of the indigenous ethnic German population. Their initial findings were highly alarming. Stumpp predicted that former outposts of Germandom would soon cease to exist altogether; many of their inhabitants no longer spoke the German language or maintained any notion of belonging to a discrete ethnic collectivity, let alone sympathized with the doctrine of National Socialism. Although eager to "unearth" as many potential "ethnic comrades" as possible, he also voiced intense unease when thousands of Ukrainian- and Polish-speaking natives suddenly emerged from the woodwork claiming to be German, even though pre-war records told a very different story.[50]

Stumpp and his colleagues were not the only Nazi operatives on the scene, however. The SS deployed a similar taskforce in Ukraine, albeit one with a much bigger footprint and far more clout: the

[48] BA R 186/32: Himmler, "Anordnung 43/AS," August 4, 1941; ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82343134-135: Greifelt to Himmler, July 2, 1941.
[49] Fleischhauer and Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans*, 66-68, 71, 75-76, 87.
[50] Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 193-198.

so-called Sonderkommando R (for *Russland*, Russia). As a composite entity made up of specialists from virtually every arm of the RKFDV apparatus, the staff of Sonderkommando R came to the Soviet Union with a wealth of experience accumulated during their involvement in screening and resettlement actions implemented across the continent of Europe. The unit's commander, Horst Hoffmeyer, was also the head of VoMi Department VII (responsible for the "safeguarding of German ethnicity"), and he brought to bear a diverse crew of academically-trained experts in demography, cronies from his own agency, and veterans from the RuSHA and the SD. Though technically based in Romanian-occupied Transnistria, Hoffmeyer's men were active all along the northern coast of the Black Sea, and wherever their travels took them, they invariably pursued the same mission: "to consolidate and protect the ethnic Germans in order to prevent a further decay of the race."[51] Yet despite the impressive depth of their expertise, the agents of Sonderkommando R presided over a classificatory regime that evinced a number of striking idiosyncrasies. First of all, the VoMi, not the RuSHA, decided who to count as German, meaning cultural and political indices enjoyed precedence over racial-anthropological criteria. In addition, Hoffmeyer encouraged a de-centralized and impromptu framework by allowing his underlings a free hand to choose whomever they liked, and even when he finally did issue extemporaneous instructions, they were "not implemented systematically." In theory, eligibility extended only to subjects with two German grandparents, but just like in Poland, verifying someone's pedigree with such exactitude proved to be almost totally unfeasible. In many instances, Sonderkommando R literally rubberstamped provisional certificates distributed to natives by the Einsatzgruppen or the Wehrmacht, and in some villages they registered anyone who could muster a few phrases in German. Spread out over vast distances and operating with barely a shred of oversight from superiors, Nazi functionaries often "made up the rules as they went along."[52]

Perhaps more than anywhere else in Hitler's empire, therefore, the power to define Germanness in southern Ukraine rested with ordinary people. With little to no intimate knowledge of conditions on the ground, delegates of Sonderkommando R naively trusted local Volksdeutsche to tell them who to include and who to keep out. This overreliance on civilian input had two important consequences. On the one hand, informants often exploited their new-found authority to settle old scores and grudges by denouncing personal enemies as Jews or Bolshevik sympathizers (whether they actually were or not); on the other hand, the same individuals sometimes helped friends, relatives, and acquaintances who really did belong to said target groups by vouching for their "racial ancestry" and furnishing them with ethnic German ID cards. In the life or death circumstances of the Holocaust, the fact that Jews and communists sought to

[51] Norbert Kunz, *Die Krim unter deutscher Herrschaft 1941-1944. Germanisierungsutopie und Besatzungsrealität* (Darmstadt: Perlentaucher, 2005), 217-224; Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 167.

[52] Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 199-201.

save themselves by masquerading in this way hardly requires further explanation, though it is not all that hard to figure out why the Slavic majority readily flocked to the call of the Nazi invaders as well.[53] Regardless of their ethnicity, most inhabitants of southern Ukraine had just recently survived the horrors of collectivization and varying levels of repression under Stalin. They surely had no love for the Soviets, which made it only natural for them to look upon the Germans as liberators (at least at first). Beyond an understandable desire to avoid official stigma, there were also material incentives at stake. Uniquely familiar with the economic implications for those consigned to the lower rungs of a totalitarian hierarchy, many joined the ranks of the "master race" to secure access to limited supplies of food, land, clothing, and agricultural machinery. As in Poland, the Nazis themselves opened this pathway into the *Volksgemeinschaft* by presenting such stark alternatives to complicity that most residents had little choice but to play ball. Thus, when Sonderkommando R rolled into Odessa and put out the word for all ethnic Germans to come forward, more than eight thousand respondents showed up to apply for recognition within the first few days.[54] "With policies in place to punish and reward according to race," writes historian Kate Brown, "the Nazi vision of a racially segregated society became a reality… As people were ranked and made to live in National Socialist racial categories, the categories – dreamt up by racial theorists – became real and acquired a terrifying agency in people's lives."[55]

Yet while putative Volksdeutsche clearly did a great deal to advance this process, their willingness to dilute the Germanization campaign by assisting imperiled compatriots left them vulnerable to suspicion as well – with tragic and bloody ramifications. To be sure, the men who ran Sonderkommando R had always viewed their "German" subjects with a latent sense of skepticism, having become convinced from very early on that their "biological worth" and "political reliability" had been steadily corrupted by centuries of mingling with Jewish and Slavic neighbors. The dawning realization that some had consciously sabotaged their work seemed to confirm such conjecture. And so it was that many volunteered for Nazi militias and turned to participation in mass murder as a way to substantiate their loyalty to Germandom and validate their privileged status. With the lure of Jewish property dangled in front of them, it did not take long for local Volksdeutsche to develop a taste for killing.[56] SS officers stationed in the Reichskommissariat Ostland picked up on something similar there. In a memorandum composed during a stopover in Baranovichi in late 1941, Fritz Schwalm dealt with the issue of Estonian collaboration in considerable detail. While portraying their homeland as "an area stamped by the proliferation of the Nordic race," he noted that the suffering of the Estonians under Soviet rule had conditioned them to welcome the Germans as "saviors" and fostered the "political prerequisites for

[53] As one Kievan put it, "everybody" wanted to register as ethnic Germans; see Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 212-213.
[54] Ibid., 9-10, 97, 101-111, 233.
[55] Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 218.
[56] Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 158-159, 234.

Germanization": "Under the impact of such circumstances, the Estonian people have grown increasingly aware that their incorporation into the new European system is a given and obvious resolution." For Schwalm, there was no better indicator of this "demonstratively positive attitude toward Germandom" than the "active engagement of the Estonians in the struggle against Bolshevism and Jewry."[57]

Regardless of whether ethnic Germans became accomplices, beneficiaries, or perpetrators of genocide, Nazi functionaries in Ukraine and elsewhere had no intention of leaving them bereft of "proper educational supervision." In a manner similar to the establishment of segregated colonies in the General Government, Sonderkommando R created new "islands of Germanness" by expelling Slavic residents from towns and villages with significant German-speaking populations and bringing in Volksdeutsche from municipalities where they did not form a majority.[58] Once they had been concentrated, a legion of activists and advisers from the VoMi and the NSV moved in to oversee a sweeping program of acculturation that focused on breaking down traditional religious ties and replacing them with "racial and ethnic consciousness." By re-opening German-language schools and founding new ones, Nazi operatives hoped in particular to "take hold of every ethnic German child, of pure and mixed blood," "surround them with the National Socialist influence," and "bring them up to be capable Germans."[59] Through a highly coordinated platform of ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and indoctrination, Sonderkommando R molded communities under its control into embryonic versions of the militarized agrarian satellites Himmler envisaged as garrisons from which the Germans would dominate Eastern Europe.[60]

Of course, the fact that these people required "careful observation and education" once again highlights the thin line that separated "authentic" Volksdeutsche from "ethnic aliens" whom Sonderkommando R selected as "Germanizable cases."[61] It is a somewhat arbitrary and often fruitless exercise to try to nail down which label most accurately reflects the self-identifications of people living in such a highly polyglot borderland. With that being said, the Nazis did have a familiar system in place to integrate inhabitants of Ukraine whom they considered to be German: the Deutsche Volksliste. On September 8, 1942, Himmler entreated Reichskommissar Erich Koch to "Germanize the Volksdeutsche in your territory" with "the greatest possible rapidity."[62] Koch, who also served as Gauleiter of East Prussia, was a seemingly unlikely figure to delegate with the management of this initiative. Infamous for

[57] ITS 1.2.7.20.8/82356396-400: Schwalm, "Der rassische Bestand des estnischen Volkes und die politischen Voraussetzungen der Eindeutschungsfähigkeit," undated.

[58] Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 95-97.

[59] Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building*, 167-168; Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 201.

[60] The largest of these "settlement pearls" was organized by Himmler himself at the so-called Hegewald site in Zhytomyr, where the RKF and the VoMi consolidated around 10,000 ethnic Germans from other parts of the Ukraine; see NARA T175/81/2601793: Himmler to Koch, September 9, 1942; BA R 49/2427: Henschel to Himmler, November 25, 1942. Also see Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building*, 162-164, 172-177.

[61] Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002), 438.

[62] BA NS 19/543: Himmler to Koch, September 8, 1942.

conspicuously crude displays of racist brutality, he casually took to calling his Ukrainian subjects "niggers" and personally hunted down "poachers" found "trespassing" within the bounds of his huge private game preserve. Yet when it came to "persons of German blood," he showed a surprisingly magnanimous side, insisting that they "be treated with respect, appreciated, and valued" – even if he privately believed that converting them into certifiable "ethnic comrades" would entail a long, strenuous period of "re-education."[63] The DVL would function as the primary medium for facilitating this aim, though its implementation in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine differed in several key respects from the parameters that held sway in western Poland (varied though they were).

For one thing, the Nazis dispensed with the prerequisite that applicants demonstrate their active involvement in the "ethnic struggle" of the interwar years. According to Hoffmeyer, who played a formative role in the discussions leading up to the introduction of the DVL, Stalin's terroristic stranglehold over every facet of cultural life in the Soviet Union had left Volksdeutsche with minimal opportunities to engage in "political activity on behalf of Germandom."[64] As this contention spread throughout the corridors of regional power, VoMi and Party administrators sharply downgraded cultural and ethnic-political qualifications – something the transcript from one upper-level meeting convened in Kiev in October 1942 showcases quite clearly: "Politically unreliable elements, insofar as they are racially flawless, must also be Germanized… the procedure will therefore be a thoroughly generous and flexible one… [so that] people who only have a fractional amount of German blood will be Germanized without regard to their attitude and language."[65] This relatively tolerant approach derived in no small part from an acknowledgement of the exceedingly high rates of intermarriage that typified Ukraine's ethnic complexion, which in turn directly shaded how the Nazis defined the individual categories of the Volksliste. While Group 1 was reserved solely for "persons of pure German ancestry who can be recognized as Germans," Group 2 and Group 3 comprised those "who live in or stem from ethnically mixed marriages," with the dividing line between the two fixed around whether subjects "exhibited through their previous lifestyle that they identify themselves as Germans" or alternatively "must be counted as devotees of an alien ethnicity." Above all, however, the most significant peculiarity of the DVL in Ukraine was the total absence of a Group 4 for anti-German "renegades." The reasoning for this was chillingly straightforward: although Nazi officials kept the doors of inclusion open to former members of Soviet youth organizations, they simply assumed that all adult German communists had "either fled with the Bolsheviks or been condemned to death and shot by the Einsatzgruppen."[66]

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[63] Fleischhauer and Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans*, 101.

[64] BA R 186/3: Ohlendorf to Himmler and Lorenz, November 10, 1942.

[65] BA R 186/3: Behrends, "Aktenvermerk betr. eine Besprechung mit Dargel und VoMi-Vertretern," October 9, 1942.

[66] BA R 186/3: Brückner to Behrends, October 12, 1942; BA R 186/3: "Niederschrift über die Besprechung am 23. November 1942," unsigned, undated. Also see Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 260-261.

Beyond a rather lenient set of parameters (at least as far as Danzig-West Prussia and Upper Silesia were concerned), the main feature the DVL in Ukraine shared with its precursors in western Poland was the bitter infighting that quickly erupted among the various agencies involved. Once Himmler had granted Koch permission to oversee the management of the Volksliste, the Reichskommissar made it unequivocally clear to the SS that his underlings alone bore "sole responsibility for the task of Germanization." The decision-making process was supposed to "build on the preparations of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle" (and here is where the work of Sonderkommando R factored in), though even the most prominent VoMi apparatchiks (like Hoffmeyer) had to concede that they were "only empowered to file appeals and objections, not to arbitrate the final ruling."[67] Naturally enough, these men still did not respond favorably when civil servants and Nazi Party bureaucrats cast aspersion on their verdicts, and they repeatedly complained that Koch's cronies had ignored the input of local ethnic German notables with whom they had cultivated personal and professional ties. "The Volksdeutsche themselves must be included in the deliberations," argued one VoMi official; in his view, "A reliable informant is in a much better position to say who in his village is a German than some urban committee could ever be."[68] The SD deputies who sat on these boards also lodged numerous protests, citing "the most heated differences of opinion" and accusing rivals of not only overlooking the criterion of "ancestral purity," but failing to distinguish between the DVL and the Re-Germanization Procedure. In many locales, Koch's men reacted to such criticisms by barring SD and VoMi delegates from participating in the proceedings.[69]

As with the DVL in western Poland, the most contentious disputes cropped up around the issue of racial selection. Himmler fully intended to have the EWZ screen everyone enrolled in groups 2 and 3 – that is, "all persons who cannot prove their German descent due to a lack of documents or ethnic German witnesses," as well as those whose "affiliation to Germandom" appeared "doubtful" because they had "ethnically alien spouses" or did not speak German as their mother tongue. In these cases, "provisional naturalization" would be "contingent upon racial fitness."[70] Yet while Alfred Rosenberg's Ostministerium initially consented to Himmler's wishes, Koch rejected the involvement of the EWZ out of hand.[71] Representatives from this agency were not even invited to attend the negotiations in Berlin and Kiev that preceded the introduction of the Volksliste.[72] Instead, the guidelines issued by the Reichskommissariat Ukraine in December 1942 stated that the Racial Policy Office of the NSDAP would handle racial

[67] BA R 186/3: Ohlendorf to Himmler and Lorenz, November 10, 1942; BA R 186/3: Behrends, "Aktenvermerk betr. eine Besprechung mit Dargel und VoMi-Vertretern," October 9, 1942.

[68] BA R 186/3: Brückner to Behrends, October 12, 1942.

[69] Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 263.

[70] BA R 186/3: "Niederschrift über die Besprechung am 23. November 1942," unsigned, undated; BA R 186/3: Ohlendorf to Himmler and Lorenz, November 10, 1942.

[71] BA R 186/3: Behrends, "Aktenvermerk betr. eine Besprechung mit Dargel und VoMi-Vertretern," October 9, 1942; BA R 186/3: Brückner to Behrends, October 12, 1942.

[72] BA R 186/3: "Niederschrift über die Besprechung am 23. November 1942," unsigned, undated.

examinations.[73] The race experts of the RuSHA certainly did not take this slight lying down. First they suggested in late September 1942 that Himmler go directly to the Führer and request a "formal delimitation of competencies" between Koch's executive and the RKFDV. When nothing came of this proposal, they switched tactics in March 1943 and lobbied for the support of the Party Chancellery, likewise to no avail.[74] By that point, however, the NSDAP leadership had also started to express concerns about Koch's laissez-faire approach. In February 1943, agents of the Racial Policy Office submitted a report to Bormann in which they censured DVL assessors in the Crimea and the Volga region for totally disregarding their expertise and thereby enabling "racially alien blood types" to enter the *Volksgemeinschaft*. As they saw it, the fault for these improprieties lay squarely with Koch: "If the Reichskommissar has heretofore attached no weight whatsoever to our racial principles, it is because he has obviously not yet dealt with the racial question in any adequate way."[75] Rosenberg intervened a short time later, demanding that Koch (his nominal subordinate) "permit the bureaus of the Racial Policy Office to conduct a racial examination of the cases in question."[76] Koch refused; deeply contemptuous of Rosenberg, whose policies he undercut at almost every turn, he would not be cowed by anyone save Hitler himself. The best the Ostministerium could do was try to ensure that DVL applicants from Ukraine who resided in Germany as forced laborers went through some form of evaluation by the RPA – which only further infuriated the SS – though it is difficult to say to what extent this actually occurred.[77]

Regardless of which specific institution held the reins of power, it is clear that most Nazi officials in Ukraine did not trust indigenous "Germans" any more than their counterparts in Poland did. The commander of Einsatzgruppe D, Otto Ohlendorf, summed up this overarching wariness by reminding potentially overzealous associates that "Acceptance into the Deutsche Volksliste is not to be confused with the award of German citizenship. The latter takes place only after a probationary timeframe, during which the undesirables can still be excluded. The same goes for the conferral of conditional state subjecthood."[78] In a manner almost identical to what transpired in western Poland, the DVL became a vast storage receptacle for subjects whom the National Socialists might want to incorporate one day, yet could not under any circumstances allow to remain in thrall to the enemy. Hoffmeyer was so convinced that the Volksdeutsche of Ukraine harbored a natural attraction to foreign cultures that he advised shipping everyone in Group 3 to the Old Reich; "otherwise there exists the danger that the consolidated

[73] BA R 6/131/64-66: Dargel, "Richtlinien über die Durchführung der Aufnahme der Volksdeutschen in die Deutsche Volksliste," December 7, 1942.

[74] BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942; BA R 186/3: Schultz to Greifelt, March 12, 1943. Also see Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 262.

[75] BA R 186/3: Kap to Greifelt, February 16, 1943.

[76] BA R 186/3: Kinkelin to Gross, February 24, 1943.

[77] BA R 186/3: Gross, "Rundschreiben Nr. 5/53," undated; BA R 186/3: Brückner to Kinkelin, April 14, 1943. Also see Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 262.

[78] BA R 186/3: Ohlendorf to Himmler and Lorenz, November 10, 1942.

settlement of ethnic Germans in the Ukraine will produce not a German heartland, but a hotbed of renewed mixing."[79] The core idea here was hardly original; it merely reiterated a viewpoint that echoed throughout the ranks of Nazi officialdom from France to Poland and beyond. And just like in these countries, albeit to a greater degree, the "munificence" shown in the occupied Soviet Union coincided with a fanatical intolerance for "political deviations." If the regime was capable of forgiving people who had allegedly engaged in "anti-German acts of subversion" before the war (so long as they were not communists), it could never pardon sins of commission that persisted after their "reclamation." Thus, the architects of the DVL in Ukraine announced from the outset that ethnic German families deemed guilty of "treasonous behavior" (broadly defined) would no longer get a free pass: "If necessary, the parents must be transferred to a concentration and the children delivered to a reformatory."[80]

As the occupation wore on, the Nazis uncovered ever more reasons to follow through on this threat, not so much because their subjects repudiated the precepts of National Socialism or resisted Germanization, but because grassroots enthusiasm intensified recurring bouts of panic over racial and ethnic-political security. The incessant denunciations tendered by local Volksdeutsche implied that Jews, Slavs, and communists lurked around every corner, which inevitably raised the question of whether anyone could be integrated into the German body politic without damaging its integrity.[81] The diverse ethnographic composition and multicultural leanings of the population infused these anxieties with a sense of existential dread propelled by interrelated fears of miscegenation and "going native." A member of Stumpp's unit recorded with dismay that in some communities more than half of the ethnic Germans had not only married Ukrainians, but adopted their customs and traditions. After surveying a group of Volksdeutsche in Vinnytsia, another Nazi functionary concluded, "From a racial perspective, the ethnic Germans here subsist at a very low level. They also do not make a good impression in terms of character. In the countryside, we found only two families of pure German stock that can also speak German."[82] The same feelings of shock and revulsion prompted the DVL branch office in Zhytomyr to strike one "racially impeccable" young woman from the Volksliste in February 1942 because she applied for approval to wed a Ukrainian. These sorts of observations only reinforced the suspicion that many inhabitants had tricked the state by falsely claiming descent from German forefathers in order to obtain better living conditions. So too did the growing frequency with which the SS exposed attempts to shelter "racial and political enemies" within the protective confines of the "ethnic community." Allegations of criminality soon filtered into the mix as well, inspiring draconian penalties designed to squash even the most trifling semblances of lawlessness. In October 1942, for instance, the district police chief in Koziatyn sentenced

[79] BA R 186/3: Hoffmeyer to Brückner, November 4, 1942.
[80] BA R 186/3: Behrends, "Aktenvermerk betr. eine Besprechung mit Dargel und VoMi-Vertretern," October 9, 1942.
[81] Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 97.
[82] Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 198-199.

young Herbert Hafke to death for stealing food, asserting that he was "a bandit of the worst kind and therefore cannot be admitted into the German *Volksgemeinschaft*."[83] As Hafke's fate suggests, all of these various elements swirled together to whip up a furious storm of indiscriminate violence that broke on the just and the unjust alike, an environment in which the slightest signs of misbehavior or nonconformity could be construed as legitimate political opposition and punished with the utmost brutality. As time went by, the Germans increasingly resorted to beatings, public flogging, and summary executions to keep their charges in line, and in early 1943, they also began shipping them to concentration camps.[84]

The dynamics of National Socialist Germanization policy in the Soviet Union may have been exceptionally ferocious in comparison with elsewhere in occupied Europe, but they were not altogether unique. Ukraine in particular saw a juxtaposition of violence paired with assimilatory intent that did not differ in essence from what went on in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other countries – not to mention what happened to WED candidates in the Reich itself. Indeed, one might say that the Nazis transplanted the central paradox of the Re-Germanization Procedure to points abroad without even realizing it, for here too the aim of guaranteeing that "not a single drop of German blood" remained "useful to a foreign ethnicity" was achieved through destruction as much as integration. With the tide of the war increasingly turning against Germany, this tricky balancing act between inclusiveness and exclusivity, sustainable enough in the short term, became ever more difficult to pull off. And yet, rather than receding in scope or swinging toward one extreme or the other, the strains of full-scale military retreat in fact pushed the "hunt for good blood" to expand in both directions at the same time, trapping millions of hapless civilians within its grasp during the final stage of Nazi rule in Eastern Europe.

As the Red Army swept westward in 1943 and 1944, the Germans devoted an extraordinary amount of effort to moving as many subjects as possible into areas still under their control. This undertaking began with ethnic German enclaves situated at the outermost fringe of the Nazi empire, in regions such as the Volga Delta, the Caucasus, and the Donets Basin, which stood in immediate danger of being overrun in the wake of the disaster at Stalingrad.[85] Closer to home, the growing strength of the Soviet partisan movement also forced the SS to relocate thousands of Volksdeutsche from the Ostland to Galicia in the spring of 1943 (a second wave of "evacuations" from this region took place in the summer of 1944).[86] Shortly after the miscarriage of the Wehrmacht counteroffensive at Kursk in August 1943, the focus of resettlement activity shifted to western Ukraine, where Hoffmeyer and his VoMi colleagues had

[83] Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building*, 170-171.
[84] Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*, 212-213; Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 160, 193-194.
[85] NARA T-175/73/2590278: Stier to Himmler, December 10, 1943.
[86] NARA T-175/73/2590396: Kube to Himmler, February 13, 1943; NARA T-175/73/2590344: Stier to Brandt, March 17, 1943; BA R 59/70/3: Ellermeier to Brückner, July 8, 1944.

organized the transport of no less than 250,000 people by May of the following year – first to the General Government, then on to the Warthegau.[87]

This mass exodus, implemented under the slogan of "repatriation," created the context in which Himmler's disciples embarked on their last great classification project of the war. In the spring of 1943, the EWZ obtained permission from Rosenberg to vet all outgoing refugees from Ukraine (including DVL entrants) as well as the Ostland, which Koch and Löhse apparently agreed to as well (their own administrative authority was rapidly crumbling by that point in any case).[88] Some of these "Russian Germans" underwent an examination before their departure – that June, for instance, one team spent a week appraising fifty-five families in Zhytomyr – though most would wait until after their arrival in the Warthegau during the second half of 1944.[89] That the naturalization process operated according to "racial-biological characteristics" can be gleaned from the fact that the Eignungsprüfer had the power to overturn earlier rulings issued by the DVL branches, which they did with such regularity that even fellow SS officers started to gripe. Some EWZ personnel believed that the race inspectors (who had by this point gained the upper hand within the commissions) rejected far too many individuals of proven German ancestry.[90] VoMi officials, on the other hand, disapproved of their moderation with respect to examinees who could not verify "pure German descent" or a German cultural upbringing. "While the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle holds fast to ethnic-political standpoints," one of them wrote in December 1944, "the Einwandererzentralstelle thrusts the racial judgment into the foreground. If an ethnic German receives the racial mark RuS-I, it does not matter whether he is a half-breed or cannot speak German… Thus, the evaluation of the resettlers often produces differences of opinion."[91] High-ranking figures outside the SS also voiced criticism. Gauleiter Greiser, who had the thankless task of caring for the incoming multitudes, did not see why "evacuees" favored by the RuSHA should receive any special entitlements, especially given that they exuded an "asocial impression" instilled by "years of political indoctrination under Bolshevism."[92]

In truth, the Eignungsprüfer were not entirely satisfied with the results of this enterprise either. They complained that they did not have enough time to reach definitive conclusions because of the huge number of people involved – which rendered "family evaluations" all but impossible – and commonly derided many of the downtrodden "repatriates" they encountered as "inferior." Nevertheless, the ratio of those who acquired "conditional state subjecthood" or full German citizenship was much higher than the proportion of those who did not. The staff of EWZ Commission XXV, for instance, endorsed all but one

[87] Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1986), 205-208.
[88] BA R 59/70/4: Brückner to Ellermeier, July 8, 1944; Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 266-267.
[89] Fleischhauer, *Deutschen in der Sowjetunion*, 186; Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 210; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 469.
[90] BA R 69/1131/11-12: Backofen, "Vermerk 97c," undated.
[91] BA R 59/88/17-28: "Jahresbericht des Beauftragten der VoMi bei der EWZ," unsigned, Decemer 3, 1944.
[92] BA NS 19/2604/10-11: Greiser to Himmler, February 18, 1944.

of the 397 subjects from Ukraine they perused in Drohobycz before pulling out of Galicia in 1944. Greifelt likewise extolled the "racial, ethnic-political, and economic worth" of "evacuees" from the Reichskommissariat Ostland, even if he too felt that their long exposure to the communist system of collective farming would necessitate a substantial amount of "training" to overcome. SD delegates working within the EWZ also conveyed positive assessments, praising "Russian Germans" as an enhancement to the "racial quality" of the German *Volk* as a whole.[93]

It is certainly valid to attribute the wholesale removal of civilians from Soviet Union during the later war years to strategic calculations. The Nazis obviously did not want to leave anything of value behind that the Red Army could potentially benefit from (hence the scorched-earth tactics that accompanied the German retreat). More importantly, "repatriation" supplied fresh stores of military and economic manpower to a regime that desperately needed both. That is precisely why the EWZ registered able-bodied men for service in the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS as a matter of course (those whom they awarded provisional citizenship anyway), while nearly all "evacuees" who could not fight at the front were deployed as laborers in one profession or another. Upon closer review, however, it is abundantly clear that we are dealing with a far more complex aggregate of motives that in turn demands a much more nuanced interpretation. The race and resettlement experts of the SS did not have to abandon their ideological principles in order to plug holes in the labor force or furnish the army with new recruits, and even when "borderline cases" did present an either-or proposition, the trial nature of "conditional state subjecthood" allowed them to have their cake and eat it too. The notion of "probation" (*Bewährung*) is the key factor to remember here: if someone failed to "prove" their "racial fitness," if their subsequent behavior did not substantiate the existence of "German blood" in their veins, the Eignungsprüfer could always rescind the initial decision and dismiss the person in question from the realm of obligation bound up with membership in the "ethnic community."[94] We should also keep an equally relevant consideration in mind: in an atmosphere of total war, there was simply no real practical reason to go through the trouble of "sifting" a quarter of a million people, let alone to debate the fine points of classification interminably, if the Nazis intended solely to exploit them as slaves or cannon-fodder – especially since they had already press-ganged millions of European civilians into servitude without applying anywhere near the same inordinate level of scrutiny. The enduring power exerted by fantasies of demographic growth and biological rejuvenation is the only credible explanation for why they would squander precious resources on such a seemingly useless pursuit at a time when Germany teetered on the brink of an abyss.

This becomes even more readily apparent when one realizes that the SS took advantage of the flight from the East to procure new candidates for the Re-Germanization Procedure. As they hastily

[93] NARA T-175/73/2590285-286: Greifelt to Himmler, August 17, 1943; Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 281-283.
[94] Ibid., 240, 284-285.

withdrew from their positions in the U.S.S.R., it was not uncommon for Nazi functionaries and Wehrmacht units to snatch up virtually anyone they could get their hands on. Self-proclaimed Volksdeutsche were hardly the only former Soviet citizens who ended up in Poland as "repatriates." Wilhelm Stuckart, still based at the Interior Ministry in Berlin, announced in January 1945 that the term "repatriate" or "returnee" encompassed "all inhabitants who have been transferred from territories previously occupied by German troops in the course of military evacuation measures. It can refer to Germans as well as ethnic aliens."[95] Long before then, the Eignungsprüfer employed with the EWZ commissions had also recognized that this nebulous rubric in fact comprised a "dense amalgam of nationalities," though at first they categorized foreigners deemed "racially valuable" as Deutschstämmige and passed them on to VoMi camps in the Warthegau.[96] In the spring of 1944, however, the RuS-Führer in East Prussia, Ermin Künzel, decided on his own initiative to perform racial examinations on a group of two thousand "ethnically alien refugees" from Bialystok who had recently arrived in Königsberg, afterwards recommending 479 of them for admission into the WED.[97] The VoMi backed Künzel's proposal and began registering prospective candidates in Riga, though Günther Stier and his associates at the RKF Staff Main Office were hesitant to consent, fearing that such a dispensation would "unleash a flood of similar requests from other evacuees."[98] Himmler ignored their misgivings; to him, a "flood" of applicants for the WED was something to be embraced, not discouraged. On December 19, 1944, the EWZ received instructions to treat Deutschstämmige from the Ostland who met the "necessary conditions" in accordance with the guidelines decreed for "Germanizable Baltic refugees" back in 1941 and "immediately include them in the Re-Germanization Procedure."[99] As late as February 1945, long after they had been pushed out of Poland, EWZ officials were still busy dealing with formalities of enrolling these people in the WED, along with several thousand additional Deutschstämmige from the General Government whom the SS also resettled as the Red Army crept ever closer to Germany.[100]

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[95] BA R 186/11: Stuckart to Keitel, January 15, 1945.

[96] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 469-470. EWZ officials often commandeered non-German whom the VoMi had included in the evacuations from the Soviet Union, particularly those of mixed ethnic parentage. They also took a special interest in ethnic German women who had been impregnated by "ethnic aliens." The commissions reported all of these subjects to the Aussenstelle in Łódź, where RuSHA personnel decided whether or not to enter them into the WED; see BA NS 19/2604/10-11: Greiser to Himmler, February 18, 1944; BA R 69/643/26: Backofen to EWZ Komm. XV and XVI, November 15, 1944; BA R 49/73/174: Backofen to Gradmann, November 22, 1944. The records of the International Tracing Service contain list material from the EWZ on hundreds of "unaccompanied children" whom the Nazis also took into custody; see ITS 4.1.2.4.

[97] BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," May 18, 1944; BA R 59/70/1: Ellermeier to Haltermann, July 7, 1944.

[98] BA R 59/46/31-32: Stibert to Cassell, December 7, 1944; BA R 69/643/1: Stier to Brückner, August 28, 1944.

[99] BA R 69/643/6-10: Malsen to Bethge and Brückner, December 29, 1944; BA R 69/643/14: Malsen to Greifelt, January 25, 1945. These guidelines also conformed in part to those for Deutschstämmige in the General Government.

[100] BA R 186/1: Malsen, "Vermerk betr. Stand der Tätigkeit der EWZ," January 31, 1945; BA R 186/1: Kaltenbrunner, "Entwurf über Behandlung der Einbürgerungsanträge und der Feststellungsverfahren über den Erwerb der Deutschstaatsangehörigkeit," February 12, 1945. On Deutschstämmige from the General Government, see BA R 186/35: Greifelt to HSSPFs, October 13, 1944; BA R 49/3073/106-108: Bethge to Greiser, December 21, 1944.

It is worth taking a moment to reflect upon the extent to which civilians whom the Nazis "evacuated" during the later war years actually had a say in any of this. For many aspiring Volksdeutsche, the impending reality of defeat left few alternatives; having sided with the German invaders, they rightly suspected that the Soviets would condemn them to death as fascist collaborators and thus willingly consented to emigrate westward.[101] Surely most of the circa forty-five thousand inhabitants who applied for recognition as Germans in the Generalbezirk Zhytomyr must have assumed that the Nazis represented their only hope for survival once the Red Army drew near in the autumn of 1943.[102] As Doris Bergen points out, the chaos of the retreat ironically seems to have strengthened feelings of devotion to the National Socialist cause, as some individuals clung to their preferential status as members of the "master race" and pinned their hopes on "final victory" in a manner that in retrospect appears incredibly thoughtless, perversely fanatical, and downright masochistic – unless we consider that trying to reverse one's identification and repudiate the Germans could also yield deadly consequences.[103] With all that being said, it is clear that the Nazis frequently terrorized uncooperative residents into joining the exodus – more than a few were shot for refusing to leave – and shuttled them off to an uncertain fate in Poland, ostensibly "for their own good," unquestionably against their will.[104] The tens of thousands of children they forcibly removed from the rear area of Army Group Center during the closing months of the occupation (some of them would also undergo racial selection) certainly had little choice but to obey their captors.[105] The Germanization campaign in the Soviet Union had always been characterized by violence, and so it reached a fitting conclusion with one last outburst of bloodshed. And yet, right up through the "evacuations" and then afterward in Poland, they did not give up their effort to register and "educate" would-be Germans until the Soviets forced them back into the Reich itself.[106]

All across the continent of Europe, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea, even as the Nazi empire imploded, the "hunt for good blood" continued. In the General Government, EWZ personnel carried out investigations of local inhabitants in Galicia well into 1944, long after orders came down to pack up and return to Łódź.[107] In March of that year, the Eignungsprüfer assigned to Commission XV in Lublin submitted twenty-nine applications for the WED, complete with detailed statistics and charts

[101] Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building*, 198.
[102] Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 207.
[103] Doris L. Bergen, "The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe and the Collapse of the Nazi Empire, 1944-1945," in *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives on the Third Reich and Its Legacy*, eds. Alan Steinweis and Daniel E. Rogers (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 104-106, 109-110, 115-117.
[104] Steinhart, *Germanization of Ukraine*, 160; Fleischhauer, *Deutschen in der Sowjetunion*, 216.
[105] BA NS 48/29/24-26: Berger, "Vermerk betr. Evakuierung von Jugendlichen aus dem Gebiet der Heeresegruppe Mitte (Heu-Aktion)," June 12, 1944. Also see Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1087-1091; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 513-514. This operation was referred to as the *Heu-Aktion*.
[106] Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building*, 197; Strippel, *NS-Volkstumspolitik*, 267.
[107] Harvey, *Woman and the Nazi East*, 247.

listing "blood quotient" percentages for each of them.[108] When the head of the EWZ field office in Krakow noticed in November 1944 that subordinates had stopped including "racially valuable ethnic aliens" in their monthly reports, superiors promptly stepped in to make sure they did not forget to do so in the future: "This oversight may be attributable to rumors that the RuSHA has suspended the Re-Germanization Procedure... That is most definitely not the case. The leaders of the commissions must take great care to report these ethnic aliens to the RuS-Aussenstelle so that re-Germanization measures can be initiated from there."[109] At that time, the front lay only about thirty miles east of Kraków. To the north, the Nazis likewise seized upon perhaps the most horrific event of the later war years to augment the German body politic with a "desirable population increase." In the aftermath of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944, as hundreds of thousands of civilians who survived the orgy of atrocities the Germans committed there finally emerged from the ruins of the beleaguered city to surrender, SS operatives were on hand to take away their children and transport them to the Reich for Germanization.[110]

The race and resettlement experts persisted in furthering the agenda of racial consolidation in western Poland as well. In late November 1943, Himmler instructed the RuSHA to accelerate the screening of subjects who belonged to Group 3 of the Deutsche Volksliste as well as all undecided cases.[111] Examiners at the Aussenstelle conducted these kinds of evaluations at least until May 1944, and probably later.[112] That same month, Gauleiter Forster at long last granted the Eignungsprüfer unrestricted access to the rolls of the DVL in Danzig-West Prussia, and the strenuous opposition they had heretofore faced in that province suddenly melted away.[113] In each of the three incorporated eastern territories, as it turns out, provincial managers of the Volksliste called for expanded enrollment throughout 1944, despite the glaring reality of growing resistance and signs of treachery among those who had already supposedly been Germanized (or perhaps because of it).[114] One report from Pomerelia that December noted, "Beyond actual Germans, there are still many inhabitants who are merely Poles in disguise, while the overwhelming majority of the population still oscillates between the two nationalities. In these circumstances, the integration of Germanizables can only proceed with extreme caution."[115] The situation was highly similar in the Wartheland, where Greiser's administration started obligating DVL members to attend special "ethnic-political education sessions" in order to bolster their "German ethnic

[108] BA R 69/601/27: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV to Rihl, March 7, 1944; BA R 69/601/19: RuS-Dienststelle EWZ Komm. XV to Rihl, March 20, 1944.

[109] BA R 69/643/26: Backofen to EWZ Nebenstelle Krakau, November 15, 1944.

[110] Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, 473.

[111] BA NS 47/33/14: Brandt to Harders and Ehlich, November 21, 1943.

[112] See the lists of RuSHA examination results in USHMMA 15.021M/4/22.

[113] USHMMA 15.168M/193/NTN198/189: Forster to Regierungspräsidenten and Landräte, May 9, 1944.

[114] Diemut Majer, *Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Munich: Oldenbuurg, 1993), 122-123. 245.

[115] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157287-288: Wohler to Thierack, December 5, 1944.

consciousness" and counter an increasingly "defeatist" attitude.[116] SS officers were still floating pipedreams about resettling these people in Germany en masse in late 1944 as well, and some even recommended awarding blanket citizenship to the "renegades" of Group 4.[117] Himmler shot down the latter idea, though he did provide for a mechanism to streamline the naturalization of around one thousand "deserving" candidates from Group 3 by terminating their "probationary period" ahead of schedule.[118] As chairman of the Supreme Court for Ethnic Questions – the highest appellate body of the DVL – he also personally ruled in favor of dozens of applicants, usually based on the findings of his race inspectors.[119] Yet if the Reichsführer-SS was capable of proffering beneficence, he could be equally vengeful toward those who spurned it. In September 1944, he commanded the HSSPFs in western Poland to "liquidate" all "persons of German descent" who had not yet signed up for the Volksliste, once again stretching the zero-sum logic of the myth of "lost German blood" to ever further extremes.[120]

All the while, the SS continued to funnel Poles into the Re-Germanization Procedure, right up until just days before the enemy arrived at the gates of the Aussenstelle. As one Nazi functionary in Danzig-West Prussia explained in February 1944, the calamitous military setbacks suffered by the Wehrmacht made it more important than ever to "incorporate racially valuable ethnic aliens into the German *Volk*." By extracting the "biologically superior segments of the Polish nation… endowed with leadership talents" and "gradually assimilating them," the Germans would not only achieve a "diminution of the Poles," but "gain a demographic enhancement that *will be of great significance for the future*."[121] The Aussenstelle agreed with this sentiment wholeheartedly; between January and May 1944, they screened 1,634 individuals and dispatched 423 of them to the Reich as WED candidates.[122] The man who replaced Vietz as RuS-Führer in Danzig-West Prussia, a certain Obersturmbannführer Ahrens, evaluated an additional 159 individuals for the same purpose in July and August of that year, ninety-eight of whom he approved, and the following November he sent another forty-five prospects on to Łódź for a "fine selection."[123] Ahrens was still performing racial examinations as of January 10, 1945 – now holed up in Gdynia instead of Danzig, which would soon come under siege – and complaining to colleagues at the Aussenstelle that the Public Health Office there had mistakenly billed him for the use of its facilities.[124]

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[116] Bergen, "The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe," 113.

[117] BA R 59/46/31-32: Stibert to Cassell, December 7, 1944; BA R 186/3: Hoffmann to Bormann, Greifelt, Ehlich, and Hildebrandt, June 13, 1944.

[118] BA NS 47/28: Stuckart, "Anordnung betr. Bevorzugter Verzicht auf den Widerruf der Staatsangehörigkeit bei Angehörigen Abt. 3 der DVL," April 17, 1944; BA R 186/3: Hoffmann to Duckart, Wirsich, and Hildebrandt, November 19, 1944.

[119] See the rulings on "questionable" DVL cases from 1944 in USHMMA 15.007M/16/228.

[120] LOC/NMT, 736-737, Doc. NO-5554: Thomsen to Bracht (English transcript), September 20, 1944.

[121] USHMMA 15.168M/3/NTN198/178: Huth to Landräte, Oberbürgermeister, and Regierungspräsidenten, February 28, 1944.

[122] See the transport lists of the Aussenstelle in IPN Fond 167/6/1-44.

[123] See Ahrens' monthly reports for 1944 in BA NS 47/38.

[124] BA NS 47/27/27: Weidgen to Rihl, January 10, 1945.

The Red Army captured Łódź a mere eight days later. By that point, RuSHA inspectors at the Aussenstelle had enlisted no less than 46,113 Poles into the WED.[125]

If the dramatic upsurge in popular unrest that typified the twilight phase of the Second World War underlined the futility of Germanization in western Poland, the chaotic conditions of daily life in Slovenia seemed to render it all but impossible. "The despondent mood of the population in Lower Styria and Carniola is thoroughly understandable," remarked one German magistrate in June 1944, "Murder, rapine, attacks on train cars, abduction by brigands – all of these things go on without any practical or meaningful response." Because Slovenes who worked for the occupation regime or appeared to be pro-German in some other way were routinely assassinated – apparently at an even higher rate than local Volksdeutsche – few of their compatriots dared to speak German in public, let alone to identify as Germans. According to this particular official, Himmler's merciless war against the partisans had created a maelstrom of violence that trapped civilians "between the Scylla of the bandits and the Charybdis of the Gestapo."[126] Nevertheless, HSSPF Rösener did not deviate from the path charted by his master; instead, he launched a renewed "pacification campaign" and reinstated the practice of transferring detainees to Germany as WED candidates. In February 1944, the SD constructed a special compound outside Maribor reserved solely for families selected by the RuSHA "on racial and biological grounds," nearly all of which had been taken into "protective custody" for having allegedly supported the insurgency. Later that year, the VoMi began shipping these prisoners to resettlement camps in the Bavarian towns of Memmingen and Altötting, where the last transports from Slovenia arrived sometime in the spring of 1945.[127] Elsewhere in Yugoslavia, the Nazis also doubled down on the effort to apprehend "bandit children." In May 1944, Arthur Phleps, commander of the 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division "Prince Eugen" – then engaged in the suppression of partisans in Croatia – received instructions from Himmler to "collect parentless youths from across the Balkan territories" and hand them over to RuSHA inspectors in Slovenia, who would then oversee their placement in German boarding schools.[128] In Himmler's all-or-nothing view, "These youths, if they survive, can only flow in one of two directions: either to the communists, if we do not take them in, or to us, if we do."[129] Although available evidence does not indicate how many children the SS abducted in this fashion – Phleps' unit was wiped out by the Red

[125] IPN Fond 167/6/1-44. Madajczyk puts the number at 37,423, though he did not incorporate statistics from the General Government; see *Okkupationspolitik*, Table 15. This figure refers only to Polish candidates who passed through the Aussenstelle; it does not include those who applied for entry after their arrival in Germany as forced laborers.

[126] ITS 1.2.2.0.13/82157416-417: Generalstaatsanwalt Graz to Thierack, June 5, 1944.

[127] See the report by Dr. Pero Damjanović on Nazi resettlement camps near Maribor in ITS 1.2.7.23.8/82205622-626. Also see Brigitte Entner, "Deportation" in *Pregon koroških Slovencev – Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-2002*, ed. Augustin Malle (Klagenfurt: Drava, 2002), 181.

[128] BA NS 19/1514/3-4: Himmler to Phleps, May 20, 1944; BA NS 19/1514/8: Grothmann to Generalkommando 5. SS-Gebirgskorps, September 12, 1944.

[129] BA NS 19/1514/7: Himmler to Berger, July 14, 1944.

Army in October 1944 – it nonetheless shows us quite clearly that the breakdown of German rule in Yugoslavia did not blunt the hard edges of Nazi racial imperialism.

Much the same can be said about the state of affairs in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, albeit with some qualification. In a speech delivered on April 3, 1944, HSSPF Karl Hermann Frank called upon subordinates to intensify the "assimilation of racially suitable Czechs" as well as the "expulsion of all destructive elements of the anti-German intelligentsia."[130] Rhetorical bluster notwithstanding, Frank did at least try to steer a more moderate course than that pursued by his counterparts elsewhere, though here too the Germanization drive of the later war years centered on corralling the children of executed resistance fighters. His closest aide, Robert Gies, conceded in June that such measures provoked widespread public outrage and endangered the "maintenance of labor peace necessary for the unrestricted production of war materiel." All the same, Frank assured Himmler that he would carry on the kidnapping program no matter what: "In the future… we will see to it that children whose parents have been condemned to die are taken into custody at once… Lebensborn will then assign the racially valuable elements to German families or children's homes, while those over seventeen years old are to be admitted into a concentration camp."[131] RuSHA delegates in Prague still supervised this endeavor, but that was hardly the only item on the docket. As late as February 1945, the Eignungsprüfer performed racial assessments on "ethnically mixed couples" and inhabitants who applied for German citizenship.[132]

The year 1944 also saw the continuation of pre-existing demographic schemes in France and the emergence of a few new ones. The RuS-Führer in Paris, Walter Zwickler, followed in the footsteps of his predecessors by honing in the minority contingent of Slavic migrant workers living in the northeastern industrial sector of the country – some of whom actively petitioned to join the WED. Stanislawa Ligocka, for instance, appealed to the EWZ to resettle her family from Paris to Germany, though because they were "of pure Polish descent," the agency declined and instead relayed her letter to the RuS-Führer. "With respect to race," Zwickler informed superiors in March 1944, "the family was evaluated with the grade RuS-II and is thus capable of Germanization." Having been "personally convinced" of the Ligockas' "upstanding attitude and behavior," he subsequently arranged their transport to an Eindeutschungslager in the Reich. The following May, he did the same thing for the Senyks, a Ukrainian family, justifying his decision with the rationale that "otherwise these people would be lost to our *Volk* and in the course of time claimed by a foreign nationality."[133] Zwickler's top priority, however, was to trawl for "lost German blood" among native French civilians. In late November 1943, he screened 107 students from the University of Strasbourg whom the Gestapo had arrested for participating in an anti-German

[130] Frank, "Rede über Umvolkungspolitik im Reichsprotektorat," April 3, 1944, in Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost*, Anlage 35.
[131] BA NS 19/375/11: Gies to Brandt, June 13, 1944.
[132] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 176.
[133] BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Turner, March 15, 1944; BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Klinger, May 26, 1944.

demonstration. "Among these students," he concluded shortly thereafter, "there are many persons of German stock… [whose] political orientation stands in direct contrast to their ancestry." Forty of these young men and women were slated for the WED on account of their "biologically valuable characteristics"; the remaining sixty-seven were shipped by cattle car to Buchenwald and Auschwitz.[134] Zwickler likewise vetted 1,119 French volunteers for the Waffen-SS between November 1943 and May 1944, when he expanded these investigations to include Red Cross nurses too. During the same period, he also somehow found time to classify 153 young women who wished to marry their German fiancées (almost always SS men).[135] In the case of Odette Gaumont, the RuS-Führer detected a "predominant Nordic racial component" on the basis of her "pink-white skin," "blue-gray eyes," "light blond hair," "oval face," and "moderately curved occiput." Madeleine Blonay evoked a similarly promising impression, though in this instance he recommended an immediate transfer westwards given that "French terrorists" had threatened her family on account of their "staunchly pro-German attitude."[136] His final project, however, was by far the most spectacular. In the summer of 1943, Wehrmacht officers stationed in the British Channel Islands had lobbied the SS to retrieve between sixty to eighty children of German soldiers and English mothers whom they described as "for the most part racially flawless due to the strong Nordic element here."[137] Zwickler got wind of this proposition in the spring of 1944; together with provincial representatives of Lebensborn and the EWZ, he planned to visit the island of Jersey that June, examine the subjects in question, and "extract" those deemed "racially valuable." Once the Allies landed in Normandy on June 6, of course, his team had to cancel their much-anticipated expedition.[138]

In the months that followed, as the tentacles of German rule withered, broke, and retracted inward, the flight of the kidnappers and their accomplices began in earnest. During the summer of 1944, staff members at Nazi childcare centers all over occupied Europe started packing up their young wards and heading for the presumed safety of the Reich as fast as they could, sometimes handing off children "of good blood" to random strangers on passing trains bound for the same destination. The Lebensborn home in Belgium was evacuated in early September on just two hours' notice, its remaining children and expectant mothers shipped to Wiesbaden and then on to the German interior.[139] In spite of the danger posed by Allied air superiority and control of the high seas, hundreds of infants from Norway were flown to Leipzig and ferried to Hamburg around that same time (one ship carrying a group of these children

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[134] BA R 69/966/4: EWZ Nebenstelle Paris to Ehlich, August 8, 1943; NARA/NMT M894/14/3600: Zwickler, "Monatliche Arbeitsbericht des RuS-Führers Frankreich," December 1, 1943.

[135] See Zwickler's monthly reports from November 1943 to June 1944 in BA NS 47/65. Himmler created a number of these Foreign Legions for nationalities from all over Europe, though they did not usually undergo racial selection because they did not become actual members of the SS; see Longerich, *Himmler*, 602, 605, 609, 677-679.

[136] BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Heider, April 28, 1944; BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Heider, July 26, 1944.

[137] BA NS 2/27: Feldkommandantur 515 to Stülpnagel, July 1, 1943; BA NS 2/27: Feldkommandantur 515 to Oberg, April 27, 1944.

[138] BA NS 47/65: Zwickler to Klinger, May 24, 1944; Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 191-192.

[139] ITS 4.1.2.5/81795391: Interrogation of Otto Lang, undated.

struck a mine while in transit and sunk into the depths). Given the limited space available, in most cases SS personnel simply left their mothers behind.[140] On the other side of the continent, in Poland, the NSV likewise closed down its installations and retreated westward with stolen children in tow. Here as elsewhere, abductions would not cease until the advent of liberation.[141] In late 1944, the director of the NSV orphanage in Łagiewniki outside Kraków sent the boys under her care to Freiburg and the girls to Liegnitz; the latter would be moved yet again on February 28, 1945, this time to Reichenberg in the Sudetenland, where they were immediately parceled out to any German in the area who would take them.[142] The last transport of "racially valuable" Polish children from the Warthegau departed the Gaukinderheim in Kalisz on January 19, 1945, four days before the Red Army rolled into town.[143]

What is most noteworthy, however, is what Lebensborn employees and the Brown Sisters of the NSV did once they got back to the Reich. Fearing exposure and prosecution for their role in the crimes of the Nazi regime, these women, often with help from fellow citizens, sought to guarantee that the youngsters they brought with them would never return to their lands of origin. They covered their tracks by systematically burning potentially incriminating documents – evidence that would have implicated them as well as facilitated repatriation. They also continued to place foreign-born children with German foster parents, in some cases long after the formal cessation of hostilities in Europe. While visiting friends who worked at a local orphanage in the late summer of 1945, on German teenager was asked by the matron in charge of the institution to deliver a Polish-speaking child to the address of a family in Munich. The boy in question had arrived the day before along with fourteen others from the Lebensborn center in Steinhöring, and she suspected that they too were dispersed in the same manner.[144] The desire to conceal collective guilt, in other words, served to further the aim of demographic renewal even when the Third Reich itself no longer existed as a political entity – a revenant from beyond the grave, as it were.

Before the Nazis could be cast down into the dustbin of history, however, they succeeded in unveiling a whole new string of hair-brained schemes conceived to "regain" every last trace of "lost German blood" that still lay within their grasp – each of which from the vantage of hindsight look like signs of a gradual disassociation from reality. Naturally the most outlandish of these ventures was the one that harked back most strongly to the global pretensions of their glory days: the racial screening and attempted Germanization of Anglo-American prisoners of war. In the summer of 1942, Himmler directed the VoMi to assemble a select group of English and American POWs at a special camp in Austria in order to supervise their Germanization. While acknowledging that not a single one of these men had shown a

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[140] Nicholas, *Cruel World*, 275-276, 460-461.

[141] Ines Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität. Die gewaltsame "Eindeutschung" von polnischen Kindern in der NS-Zeit* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), 176-177.

[142] ITS 4.1.2.12/81797388-390: UNRRA Child Search Division, "Report on Interview with Käthe Hahn," undated.

[143] Gudrun Schwarz, *Die nationalsozialistischen Lager* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1990), 100-101.

[144] ITS 4.1.2.2/81794908-910: Rokossowski to Steinmetz, September 16, 1947.

"willingness to identify as men of German blood," and predicting that they would respond with "passive resistance" and possibly even "open revolt," the Reichsführer-SS nevertheless expressed confidence that "awakening their ethnic awareness" through the "enlightening influences" of propaganda and "ideological schooling" would do the trick to win them over as "friends of Germany" and potential arbiters of a future rapprochement with the Western Allies.[145] Werner Lorenz and his VoMi colleagues, who perhaps recognized this pipe dream for what it was (they were incredibly overstretched at any rate), initially dragged their feet and proceeded at a sluggish pace. As of January 1943, they had canvassed only a handful of prisoners, all of them soldiers from the overseas British dominions whom the Wehrmacht had captured during the disastrous commando raid on Dieppe in August 1942, none of whom had any interest in defecting (a result Lorenz postponed delivering to his master).[146] It was not until January 1944 that Himmler truly pressed the issue, now obliging Lorenz to compile an index of *all* POWs with "German-sounding names," beginning with the Americans, and release those who consented to "re-nationalization."[147] But despite enjoying the full cooperation of the army and the German Foreign Office, the VoMi had mustered just eighty potential candidates by June; the following September, the Reichsführer-SS finally conceded defeat and shelved the initiative.[148]

Discouraged, though not deterred, he grafted an almost identical framework onto a different group of captives instead, unleashing the race examiners to hunt for "Nordic blood" among the most helpless type of prey: concentration camp inmates. Actually, the RuSHA had already been doing this to a certain extent for some time, having obtained the right to conduct racial evaluations on Poles and other Slavic forced laborers accused of "forbidden relations" with German women (the "special treatment cases"). In the waning autumn months of 1943, the Eignungsprüfer also started sporadically classifying inmates convicted of non-sexual offenses as well. That December, Reinhold Ratzeburg appraised a gang of Polish workers in Neustadt who had assaulted a German farmer "with extreme brutality"; he categorized one of them as RuS-II and another as RuS-I.[149] Ten days later, Bruno K. Schultz notified RSHA chief Ernst Kaltenbrunner about "numerous reports from the RuS-Führer" in which they complained that camp commandants had "caused difficulties and interfered with necessary racial examinations of prisoners"; he did not even mention "special treatment cases."[150] Inside and outside of Germany, it seems that inspectors usually focused on individuals whom the Gestapo had incarcerated for

[145] BA NS 19/594/2-4: Himmler, "Richtlinien für eine Sonderbehandlung deutschstämmiger Kriegsgefangenen aus Übersee und deren Gewinnung für das Deutschtum," undated.

[146] BA NS 19/3097/4-10: Lorenz to Himmler, January 13, 1943. Also see Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 200.

[147] BA NS 19/3097/24: Himmler to Kaltenbrunner, Lorenz, and Berger, January 30, 1944; BA NS 19/3097/26-27: Lorenz to Himmler, February 14, 1944.

[148] BA NS 19/3097/34-35: Kappe to Brandt, June 1, 1944; BA NS 19/3097/41: Brandt to Rimann, September 26, 1944.

[149] See Ratzeburg's itinerary for December 10, 1943 in HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1369, Bd. 146-147.

[150] ITS 2.2.0.1.1/823885334: Schultz to Kaltenbrunner, December 20, 1943.

more strictly political opposition. Franz Krzyszkowski, for instance, underwent a "rough selection" in the Stutthof concentration camp, as did Marian Oskiera in Auschwitz.[151] The primary RuSHA assessor in Bavaria, Hans Berthold Kiessling, performed examinations on Dachau inmates well into 1944.[152] Once again though, it was not until quite late in the war that Himmler standardized this process. After scanning through lists of detainees in August of that year and spotting one woman who shared his mother's maiden name, he asked the head of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office, Oswald Pohl, to register all foreign concentration camp prisoners "of German descent."[153] By mid-December, Pohl had supplied Himmler with an additional inventory containing "1,222 male and 431 female prisoners with German-sounding names"; he proposed collecting the men in Sachsenhausen, the women in Ravensbrück, then bringing in the RuSHA to determine their "capacity for Germanization" and the VoMi to "look after" those who met with favor and "re-win them for Germandom."[154] It is unclear whether this project ever got off the ground; the Soviets were already poised to strike Warsaw by that point, after all. But the fact that it was even considered is a telling barometer of just how much the obsession with "lost German blood" consumed the SS leadership during the final awful chapter of the Second World War.

The race examiners also began screening Ostarbeiter for admission into the WED – an initiative which likewise originated spontaneously in the provinces. The RuS-Führer in SS-District Rhine-Westmark, for instance, put out a communiqué in November 1942 demanding that all Ostarbeiter employed with private firms undergo a precautionary racial examination (though not those whom Nazi authorities kept locked away in secluded barracks), and his files suggest that he carried out a relatively large number of these assessments.[155] At least a few Soviet men indicted for "forbidden sexual intercourse" had also found their way into the WED in piecemeal fashion. Not until the summer of 1943, however, did leading SS functionaries contemplate opening the program to Ostarbeiter more generally. In mid-July of that year, after attaining Himmler's consent, delegates from the RSHA, the RuSHA, and the VoMi got together in Berlin and settled on a preliminary target figure of fifty to one hundred "especially suitable" candidates. The manner in which the Eignungsprüfer went about selecting these prospects departed from the usual protocol in several significant respects. For one thing, they were entreated to operate according to a "much stricter standard" than they normally would, in light of the presumably lower "biological quality" of the Soviet peoples, though also because the initiative was only supposed to take place on an "experimental basis." In addition, authority over the final judgment rested with the RSHA (Ehlich) – a peculiarity reflective of the heightened security paranoia with which the Nazis viewed

[151] USHMMA 15.021M/37/68: Rauch to Hofmann, July 2, 1942; USHMMA 15.021M/5/37/54: Klinger to Rauch, June 25.
[152] BAL B 162/2435/137-140: Affidavit of Hans Berthold Kiessling, August 2, 1966.
[153] ITS 1.1.0.6.57/82343128: Himmler to Pohl, August 13, 1944.
[154] Stiller, "Zwangsgermanisierung," 113-114, 122; Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 200.
[155] BA NS 2/82/147-148: Hornung to Hofmann, November 6, 1942.

"eastern workers" – though RuSHA personnel still held the obligation to vet a subject's entire family (to the extent that was possible at least) and, if any of them resided in the Soviet Union, to arrange for their resettlement to Germany (or "retrieval") in the event of a positive diagnosis. Nevertheless, beyond a slightly more invasive regimen of police surveillance, Soviet WED candidates were entitled to the same hypothetical benefits (and actual restrictions) as any other inductee.[156] We do not have any reliable data on how many Ostarbeiter became re-Germanizables, but the overall number was probably not very high. It appears that formal enrollment did not even get underway until January 1944 (though examinations had commenced the previous summer), and Hofmann's successor, Richard Hildebrandt, confided that the amount of incoming designees would never satisfy Himmler's preference to deploy only "racially valuable eastern workers" as "agricultural specialists" (a particular emphasis of this venture).[157] Once again, the Reichsführer-SS refused to give up on his favorite hobbyhorse. In November 1944, he even empowered the turncoat Soviet General Andrey Vlasov – commander of the collaborationist Russian Liberation Army – to recommend potential WED candidates from among his troops.[158]

Clearly, as the war entered its twilight phase, the Nazis rummaged around for "lost German blood" wherever they thought they might find it, and perhaps nothing demonstrates this maniacal fixation more forcefully than the all-out endeavor to apprehend foreign children "of good race" within Germany itself. In what was perhaps the most sickening aspect of Nazi Germanization policy, this mandate ultimately came to target the unborn. Writing from Łódź in December 1942, Hermann Krumey noted that large numbers of female workers were returning from the Reich due to pregnancy. "It must be considered," he wrote, "*whether these children ought to be taken away from the mothers*… The children of good blood could then be accommodated in homes, while the others are subjected to special treatment." In his opinion, such measures would have the added benefit of "decreasing the prolificacy of these Poles at a stroke [*…mit einem Schlage die Kinderfreudigkeit bei diesen Polinnen nachlassen*]."[159] Although Krumey probably did not know it, high-ranking officials in Berlin had already devised roughly the same solution to this "problem." That same month, Reich Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment Fritz Sauckel announced that pregnant foreign laborers from Eastern Europe would no longer be shipped back to their countries of origin; instead, they would undergo "racial investigations" designed to "identify the children of racially superior elements."[160] According to RSHA chief Ernst Kaltenbrunner, "The exigency of preventing the loss of German blood to foreign nationalities is increased by casualties incurred during

[156] BA R 59/46/19: Weber to Wolfrum, July 30, 1943; BA R 59/46/17-18: Ehlich to HSSPFs, August 4, 1943; BA NS 2/154/133: Klinger, "Anordnung über die Einbeziehung von Ostarbeitern in das WED," undated.

[157] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 346: Hildebrandt to HSSPFs, undated; BA NS 2/153/1-2: Hildebrandt, "Erlass über die rassische Grobauslese von Ostarbeitern für landwirtschaftlichen Einzeleinsatz, January 1944.

[158] BA R 59/46/24-27: Stibert to Cassell, November 22, 1944.

[159] BA R 75/9/1-17: Krumey, "Abschlussbericht über die Arbeit der UWZ im Rahmen des erweiterten 3. Nahplanes," December 31, 1942.

[160] Hamann, "Erwunscht und unerwunscht," 167-168.

the war. It has thus become necessary to collect children of foreign women who are of partly German or equally valuable blood."[161] Reich Health Leader Leonardo Conti spelled out what would happen to those who did not meet this prerequisite when he issued a series of edicts in the spring and summer of 1943 that de-criminalized abortions for unmarried Ostarbeiterinnen (Poles and Czechs soon followed).[162]

The elaborate structure concocted to manage this process drew in a wide variety of governmental departments, not to mention ordinary Germans. It was incumbent upon private enterprises in the Reich as well as the incorporated eastern territories to report all such pregnancies to the local Labor Office, which in turn contacted the Youth Office, which then determined the child's paternity and passed along this information to the responsible HSSPF.[163] The exam took place as hastily as possible – before the onset of the third trimester made termination impossible – usually in the dispensaries of forced labor barracks or at a nearby Public Health Office. Originally the RuSHA only had the right to adjudicate when the father was German or stemmed from a "Germanic" nationality (Danes, Flemings, Dutch, Norwegians, Swedes, or Walloons) – that is, until Himmler insisted in the late summer of 1943 that the agency's writ extend to all eligible cases "regardless of which ethnicity the sire belongs to." Beyond a standard medical and hereditary health checkup, carried out by state-certified doctors, the Eignungsprüfer evaluated both parents (as well as the fetus) and ascertained the extent to which they possessed "German or kindred blood," though the equally important "characterological analysis" depended heavily on the impressions of individual employers.[164] So, for instance, Reinhold Ratzeburg ranked Viktaras Dambrauskas with the grade RuS-II in large part because his overseer described him as "very hardworking and orderly."[165] If the subjects received a favorable rating, the mother was permitted to enter a Lebensborn maternity home and give birth there; in all but the rarest of occasions, her newborn was then taken away and given to an NSV nursery or a German foster family "so that their upbringing as Germans can be assured."[166] Only if the woman agreed to join the WED could she entertain the hope of ever seeing her child again.[167] The consequences of a negative assessment, of course, were immeasurably worse. If it was too late for an abortion – a traumatic experience in and of itself – the women in question usually had to work right up until the delivery date with the barest minimum of medical care. Their babies were subsequently dumped in one of several so-called Foreign Childcare Centers (*Ausländerkinderpflegestätten*) – "institutions of the

[161] BA NS 48/30: Kaltenbrunner to HSSPFs, July 27, 1943.

[162] LOC/NMT, 1094-1095, Hildebrandt Doc. 112: Conti, "Circular on Interruption of Pregnancy for Female Eastern Workers" (Englisch transcript), April 5, 1943; LOC/NMT, 1080-1081, Doc. NO-2557: Hildebrandt, "Order for the Interruption of Pregnancy for Polish Women" (English transcript), August 13, 1943.

[163] BA NS 48/30: Kaltenbrunner to HSSPFs, July 27, 1943; Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 270-272.

[164] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447587-589: RMdI to Jugendämter, Gesundheitsämter, and Fürsorgeverbände, June 5, 1944; BA NS 47/61: Hildebrandt to HSSPFs, August 23, 1943. Also see Hamann, "Erwunscht und unerwunscht," 167-168.

[165] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7360, Bd. 147-148: Ratzeburg, "Dienstbericht vom 13.11.43 bis zum 17.11.43," undated.

[166] BA NS 48/30: Althaus, "Rundschreiben Nr. 186/43," October 9, 1943; BA NS 48/30: Kaltenbrunner to HSSPFs, July 27, 1943. Lebensborn held on to mothers and children considered "especially valuable"; see Lilienthal, *Lebensborn*, 113.

[167] BA NS 47/31: Ahrens, "Vermerk betr. weibliche ausländische Arbeitskräfte," January 2, 1945; LOC/NMT, 688-689.

most primitive kind," as Kaltenbrunner put it – where German personnel stood by as they succumbed to starvation.[168] Most of these sites had a mortality rate of between eighty and ninety percent; at one in Wolfsburg, no fewer than 400 infants perished between April 1943 and April 1945.[169] Such were the depths to which the Nazis were willing to descend to "foster all valuable bloodlines for the strengthening of our people and annihilate all those that are racially inferior."[170]

While it is certainly true that many female laborers acceded to the termination of unwanted pregnancies, there can be no doubt that the entire procedure relied on coercion from start to finish. Women who refused to disclose the identity of the father were compelled to do so by the Gestapo, and they had no say whatsoever in the fate of the embryos gestating inside their wombs. One SD officer in Koblenz told subordinates in February 1944 to "apply pressure in all of these cases," and the instructions of his superiors likewise stipulated that "whenever indoctrination proves futile," state physicians need not bother gaining consent.[171] Even when a woman did want an abortion, they could not get one (at least not legally) if the Eignungsprüfer had classified the fetus as "racially suitable."[172] Mothers of "valuable stock," Kaltenbrunner explained, would merely be "informed of the advantages" connected with Germanization and "induced to acquiesce."[173] The same guidelines also pertained informally to German women impregnated by Slavic foreign workers, whose prosecution for "illicit affairs" and consequent arrest effectively placed them outside the law and left any offspring that resulted from these dalliances fair game for confiscation.[174] The overall number of abortions the Nazis effected, like the amount of non-German children they appropriated in this way, cannot be confirmed with the available evidence. What can be said with confidence, however, is that each became a disturbingly routine occurrence in locales across the Greater German Reich. The regional board of the Chamber of Physicians in Upper Franconia administered 530 "pregnancy interruptions" during the period from May 26, 1943 to April 4, 1945; out of 637 cases, only 22 attained the label "capable of Germanization," whereas the rest were deposited in a "Foreign Childcare Center."[175] In November 1944, Reinhold Ratzeburg oversaw the examination of nine pregnant Ostarbeiterinnen in the Rhineland within the span of just two weeks.[176]

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[168] ITS 4.1.0.1/82447586: "NSV Rundschreiben Nr. 10/44," unsigned, January 20, 1944; ITS 4.1.0.1/82447587-589: RMdI to Jugendämter, Gesundheitsämter, and Fürsorgeverbände, sig. illegible, June 5, 1944.

[169] On the mortality rate in these institutions, see Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 503.

[170] LOC/NMT, 686-687.

[171] Ibid.; BA NS 48/30: Kaltenbrunner to HSSPFs, July 27, 1943.

[172] LOC/NMT, 1077-1078, Doc. NO-3520: Kaltenbrunner, "Circular on Interruption fo Pregnancy for Female Eastern Workers" (English transcript), June 9, 1943; ITS 6.1.2.16/82491189: Eberstein to NSV Gauleitung Mainfranken, April 15, 1944.

[173] BA NS 48/30: Kaltenbrunner to HSSPFs, July 27, 1943.

[174] BA NS 47/30/14: Schultz to Kaltenbrunner, March 13, 1944; LOC/NMT, 1140-1145, Doc. NO-1365: Kaltenbrunner, "Circular on Punishment for Sexual Intercourse of Germans and Foreign Workers" (English transcript), March 13, 1944; BA NS 2/191/29-30: Obersteiner, "Tätigkeitsbericht 1. Halbjahr 1944," June 29, 1944.

[175] Hamann, "Erwunscht und unerwunscht," 171.

[176] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 11-12: Ratzeburg, "Dienstbericht vom 13.11.1944 bis zum 27.11.1944," November 28, 1944.

The treatment of female forced laborers and their illegitimate children in the Reich presents us with another textbook example of how National Socialist Germanization policy evolved over the course of the later war years – a truly horrifying consequence of the observation that many "racially valuable ethnic aliens" did not seem to belong in the *Volksgemeinschaft*. But the Nazis did not exactly give up on the conviction that adults could be "elevated" into "ethnic comrades" either. Why else would the regime bring in hundreds of thousands of additional consumers from all over Europe, with little regard for economic productivity, at a time when its resources were already stretched to the absolute breaking point? There are two major factors that account for this persistence. As the end drew ineluctably near, the National Socialists increasingly retreated into fantasies of "lost German blood" and did whatever they could to fulfill them, almost as if by securing as much of this biological treasure as possible they could somehow still win the war in a fashion – or at least plant the seeds for a future resurgence and triumph. On a metaphorical level, they continued to feed like vampires on the blood of other nations, trying desperately to sustain the vigor of the German body politic and possibly render it immortal. This was the rare species of victory Himmler's race and resettlement experts pursued as enemy armies pressed their backs up against the wall and the writing on it became impossible to ignore: one last-ditch, diehard effort to salvage any living testament they could from the wreckage of the Nazi empire. But there was also a deeper meaning to this chimera of national resurrection, a sense that the work of gathering "lost German blood" had not been in vain and should therefore go on until the last drop within reach had been restored to the *Volk*. And this never would have happened without the credible displays of "progress" on the home front that inspired the Nazis to continue the hunt by making it all seem worthwhile.

To be sure, the standard of living for the average re-Germanizable plummeted drastically during the final years of the Second World War. In fact, with forced laborers and refugees pouring into the Reich from all sides, there was almost nowhere left to put them. The initial decision to place Absiedler from Slovenia and Western Europe in the VoMi camps, and the proliferation of these camps more generally, are telltale signs that the number of inbound WED candidates had long since surpassed the capacity to absorb them. Although their stay in these miserably overcrowded institutions was supposed to be temporary, it often became indefinite because the HSSPFs could not find enough "politically reliable" hosts or "suitable" tenements to shelter them.[177] For many of those who did reside in private households, especially the Poles, daily life amounted to what can only be described as a living hell. Humiliation, beatings, forced labor, hunger, disease – these remained frequent fixtures in the letters they sent to the Aussenstelle, and most were fully cognizant of what might easily await those who spoke out too vocally against their hosts.[178] When SS-Sturmführer Max Welz learned that young Eugeniusz Wojczak had

[177] USHMMA 15.021M/6/45/4: Dongus to Stier, January 24, 1942. See Ehlich's testimony in LOC/NMT, 891-893.
[178] 5/35/165: Klejbach, 9.6.43; 5/35/144: Drzewinski, 3.17.43; 5/35/158: Zielinski, 6.14.43.

complained about the cruelty of his boss at the Blaubeurer textile factory in Ulm, he took the opportunity to set an example: after a savage beating, Eugeniusz was thrown into Welzheim prison. Other WED candidates in the area got the message loud and clear.[179] Given that denunciations continued unabated, the omnipresent threat of arrest proved quite effective at keeping these people in line and trapping them in an intolerable position. In October 1944, the employer of Stanislaus Piotrowski reported him to the Gestapo in Kassel for mingling with nearby Polish laborers; Wilhelm Wagner in Dauborn filed the same accusation against Stanislaus Schmidt in February 1945.[180] The fact that local Nazi prefects constantly had to "re-shuffle" these people from one workplace to another, however, reveals their keen awareness that many constituents totally disregarded state guidelines regulating their treatment. Irena Konrad, for instance, was relocated no less than three times in a single year.[181] The high incidence of flight and suicide attempts speaks to the same grim pattern of abuse, exploitation, and despair.[182] It is hardly surprising, then, that the Nazi Party Chancellery published an informational brochure in December 1944 with the aim of "enlightening" fellow citizens on the purpose of the Re-Germanization Procedure.[183]

Two episodes recounted by Roman Sobkowiak demonstrate that inductees also became the object of homicidal ideation on the part of their German neighbors. The first involved Ortsgruppenleiter Alois Kneer, who one night lurked outside the Sobkowiak's flat in a drunken stupor and bellowed out "The entire family should hang!" The second concerned their landlady, who responded to news of the July 1944 assassination plot against Hitler by telling Roman's mother "Only foreigners could have committed this outrage against our Führer. If I had poison, I would put it in the food of every foreigner who dines with me."[184] A few hosts may have acted on these murderous impulses. When the overseers of twenty year old Wladyslawa Kazala presented her body to the police in Weiblingen in August 1943, the county coroner noticed that the cause of death (a puncture wound to the abdomen) was highly inconsistent with their claim that she had died in a traffic accident.[185] In a similar vein, young Karolina Zimnawoda sustained a fatal brain injury after being viciously bludgeoned by an unknown assailant on April 18, 1945.[186] Whether victims of German brutality, vengeful gangs of escaped forced laborers, or Allied

[179] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 60.

[180] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 358: Gendarmerie Langenbieber to Landrat Fulda, October 2, 1944; HStW Abt. 411, Nr. 1008, Bd. 1136: Gestapo Frankfurt am Main to Landrat Limburg, June 29, 1944.

[181] ITS 1.0/50751008: ITS Index Card on Irena Konrad.

[182] ITS 0.1/43001106: ITS Index Card on Janina Szczesna. For other examples, see the inventory from SS-District Middle for February 1942 in NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim, Acc. 132/90, Nr. 202 as well as HStM 180 Ziegenhain, Nr. 7072: Landrat Ziegenhain to Gestapo Kassel, June 27, 1944.

[183] BA R 59/46/23: Stibert to Brückner, December 2, 1944.

[184] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 67-68, 70-71.

[185] See Kazala's ITS index card, death certificate, and other pertinent materials in ITS 0.1/26812931-935.

[186] ITS 0.1/36506350: ITS Index Card on Karolina Zimnawoda.

bombing, many WED candidates simply disappeared amid the chaos that prevailed during the final days of the Third Reich, never to be seen nor heard from again.[187]

In any event, outbursts of popular hostility toward WED candidates exerted a radicalizing effect that spread up and down the echelons of Nazi officialdom in Germany and the occupied territories. It was one thing for provincial administrators to turn a blind eye to the suffering of these people due to their (largely undeserved) reputation for "anti-German sentiment"; it was quite another for the examiners in Łódź who had previously certified their "racial value" to switch gears and suddenly attribute their "rebellious behavior" to "biological inferiority."[188] Much the same could be said of the HSSPFs, who did not hesitate to resort to "exclusion" when dealing with candidates they considered beyond redemption. HSSPF Pancke, for instance, removed Henryk Mazgaj from the WED in February 1943 for having allegedly stolen several pounds of meat from a nearby storehouse; he apparently assigned little credence to the likelihood that extreme poverty impelled Henryk to commit this crime (re-Germanizable Poles were repeatedly accused of theft).[189] In January 1944, HSSPF Gutenberger kicked eight people out of the program for a variety of supposed political offenses.[190] The following December, Gutenberger's counterpart in Hamburg, Georg von Bassewitz-Behr, decided to strike young Stanislaus Zychla from the rolls on account of his purportedly "antagonistic attitude toward Germandom."[191] In a request for the "exclusion" of Stanislawa Piotrowska dated January 24, 1945, the HSSPF for northern Austria, Walter Schimana, did not hold back from venting his spleen: "All attempts at educating this girl have failed. She was and remains lazy, dirty, and insolent, for which she has often been violently disciplined to no avail… It is high time that she be delivered to a concentration camp."[192]

Indeed, with these kinds of harsh judgments percolating throughout law enforcement circles and the judiciary, the KZ became an ever more regularized punishment for "misbehavior" and "defeatism" as the war hurdled toward its inexorable conclusion. Hence, the Gestapo dispatched Josef Milczarek to Dachau on February 3, 1944, where he died twenty-two days later. That same month, they detained Jozef Lepiarski for "subversion" and imprisoned him in Gross-Rosen. Barbara Urbanska was arrested for the same reason the following April and sent to Ravensbrück, where Sonja Pietrowska joined her in October. When local authorities discovered in January 1945 that the housemaid Sophie Godler had helped distribute an anti-Nazi propaganda pamphlet, they sentenced her to "protective custody" too. Alois Justin somehow managed to survive his time in Flossenburg and Sachsenhausen as well as the death march to Bergen-Belsen in the winter of 1944-1945, only to perish from exhaustion a mere month before the

[187] See the correspondence on the Grzegorz family in HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133.
[188] ITS 0.1/11342950: Stabsführer der RuSHA Aussenstelle to Stier, March 30, 1943.
[189] See the inventory for SS-District Middle for February 1943 in NLH Nds. 120 Hildesheim, Acc. 132/90, Nr. 202
[190] See the inventory for SS-District West for January 1944 in LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 74.
[191] StO 136, Best. Nr. 19592: Bassewitz-Behr to Landrat Oldenburg, October 23, 1944.
[192] ITS 1.2.2.1.340/11345386-387: Schimana to Bethge, January 24, 1945.

British arrived to liberate the camp.[193] In the indictment he leveled against Paul Valenta in February of the previous year, one Dortmund police officer explicitly justified such measures by casting them as an authentic expression of public outcry: "There is palpable indignation within the community over the fact that a stateless person, who does not feel connected to the community in the slightest and contributes nothing to the war effort, is allowed to vegetate and not immediately rendered harmless."[194]

Yet even when defeat became imminent, the race and resettlement experts of the SS still could not fully reconcile themselves to the idea of forsaking "bearers of lost German blood." In the fall of 1944, Gestapo officers in Darmstadt confined twenty-three year old Boleslaw Kowalczyk to the KZ because he had ignored a summons to work on the West Wall (the line of fortifications facing the border with France) and told the local Kreisleiter that "he did not want to become a German and would rather remain a Pole." HSSPF Stroop forwarded this information to the RKF and pressed for Boleslaw's dismissal from the WED. Bethge declined: "The enactment of criminal proceedings does not in itself warrant exclusion from the Re-Germanization Procedure. In my opinion, the fact that many of the most racially and behaviorally sound families put up a certain amount of resistance to re-Germanization does not speak to biological inferiority and also cannot be attributed to the current political situation."[195] When functionaries at the RSHA called for a "suspension of all re-Germanization measures for the duration of the war" in late November 1944, Himmler adamantly refused to even countenance such a gesture.[196]

The Re-Germanization Procedure destroyed people's lives, plain and simple. But that should not lead us to overlook the exertions of those agents of the National Socialist regime, both within the SS and outside of it, who did try to help WED candidates right up until the very end. One need only contemplate the practice of "re-shuffling" to see that not all of them were guilty of malfeasance. In December 1942, for instance, a state farm manager in the Hessian district of Lauterbach demanded that the Landrat supply beds and other household furniture for his employees, even though local welfare authorities had repeatedly ignored their supplications.[197] WED candidates still had friends in high places too. When a handful of judges started prosecuting re-Germanizables according to the draconian criminal code reserved for Poles, the RKF and the Interior Ministry immediately stepped in to put a stop to this. "It would contradict the purpose of Germanization," one July 1943 brief from the Reich Ministry of Justice stated, "to treat persons who are designated capable of Germanization in the same way as other people of Polish

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[193] ITS 0.1/27836175: ITS Index Card on Josef Milczarek; ITS 0.1/31527823: ITS Index Card on Jozef Lepiarski; ITS 0.1/19964936: ITS Index Card on Barbara Urbanska; ITS 0.1/46352167: ITS Index Card on Sonja Pietrowska; ITS 0.1/12192554: Gestapo Personalakte on Sophie Godler; ITS 0.1/26574530: ITS Index Card on Alois Justin; ITS 0.1/26574532: Sterbeurkunde Alois Justin.

[194] LNWD NW 174, Nr. 127, Bd. 33: "Vermerk der Kripostelle Dortmund," unsigned, February 21, 1944.

[195] HStD H 13, Nr. 3, Bd. 18-19: Girke to Stroop, October 23, 1944; HStD H 13, Nr. 3, Bd. 20: Reinke to Bethge, November 6, 1944; HStD H 13, Nr. 3, Bd. 21-22: Bethge to Stroop, November 25, 1944.

[196] BA R 59/46/24-27: Stibert to Cassell, November 22, 1944.

[197] HStD G 15, Nr. 529: Görtzische to Landrat Lauterbach, December 18, 1942.

ethnicity."[198] Magistrates in the provinces were not altogether devoid of mercy either. After the Dortmund police condemned Paul Valenta to death for a string of burglaries in May 1944, the district attorney successfully appealed to the Gestapo for a reprieve.[199] Assistance from state officials also came in much more mundane forms, such as when HSSPF Josias zu Waldeck collaborated with local welfare agencies to make sure that WED candidates in Hesse would have heating furnaces for the winter of 1942, or when Ratzeburg hectored superiors to procure subsidies for a "very valuable family" he screened in December 1943 and relocate them to "a domicile fit for humans."[200]

SS operatives on the ground were neither unreceptive to the plight of re-Germanizables nor unaware that their own compatriots were to blame for it, though even the most dogged benefactors often watched their humanitarian efforts founder in a morass of wartime austerity and ethnic bigotry. The Landrat of Lauterbach responded to one request for household goods in the winter of 1943 as follows: "I do not see why I should make an exception for these families."[201] The reply of another civil servant in Berlin to the protests of HSSPF Heissmeyer was similarly curt: "Unfortunately I cannot comply with your demand to treat Germanizable persons equally with Reich Germans."[202] This situation enabled hosts to play government agencies off each other. As one VoMi delegate reported in December 1942, "I have instructed the employers time and again that Germanizables are always to be treated as Reich Germans regardless of their as-yet incomplete naturalization. My efforts are being undermined by third parties, and, to be sure, by the state itself."[203] The Nazi Party also drew fire, especially once it came to light that many NSDAP functionaries had blocked applications for the WED and sabotaged the program by withholding welfare payments as a way to demoralize their SS rivals. The re-Germanization adviser in Berlin even admitted to concealing the negligence of several Party members out of deference to their rank.[204]

It was with great displeasure that the RKF concluded in late 1942, "The treatment of people who are sent to the Old Reich for re-Germanization is absolutely incorrect… neither administrative nor Party agencies have ever had re-Germanization measures thoroughly explained to them… as a consequence, these people are treated like foreigners, which endangers the re-Germanization process."[205] The NSDAP leadership was also unhappy with this state of affairs, so in July 1943 Bormann issued the following special bulletin to all Party members: "Submerged Germandom that once benefited politically and

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[198] USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/137: Wirsich to Thierack, August 20, 1942; HStD G 24 Darmstadt, Nr. 1829, Bd. 45: "Reichsgesetzblatt Nr. 218," June 1943.

[199] LNWD NW 174, Nr. 127, Bd. 1: Kaessman to Oberstaatsanwalt Dortmund, May 15, 1944.

[200] HStD G 38 Giessen, Nr. 178: Friedberg to Staatsforstverwaltung Wieseck, June 25, 1942; HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 1369, Bd. 146-147: Ratzeburg to Castagne, December 10, 1943.

[201] HStD G 15 Lauterbach, Nr. 5279: Landrat Lauterbach to Arbeitsamt Giessen, December 24, 1942.

[202] BA R 59/46/13: Fölsche to Heissmeyer, November 14, 1942.

[203] BA R 59/46/6: Adam to Fähndrich, December 14, 1942.

[204] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11376: Kugel to Stroop, December 20, 1944; BA NS 2/82/168-169: Hinsch to Heissmeyer, September 29, 1942.

[205] BA R 59/46/7: Arlt to Behrends, September 7, 1942.

culturally alien peoples in the guise of a leadership class must be reclaimed for the *Volk*… It does not matter that Party have neglected the welfare of these people with the justification that they do not speak German. As in the time of struggle, we must fight for each individual person and mobilize all forces which facilitate their return to our nation."[206] The impact of this intervention was marginal at best; Waldeck was still badgering Nazi bureaucrats in Hesse for their lack of cooperation well into 1944. In a memorandum distributed to all municipal departments in the region that April, he did not conceal his disappointment that many re-Germanizables (Lorrainers above all) insisted on being identified as foreigners. All the same, he implored readers to understand that "These people have been retrieved as bearers of valuable German blood to ensure that they no longer serve as cultural fertilizer for foreign states… Although it is often difficult for them to find their way to Germandom within a short period of time, they possess absolutely necessary faculties which must only be summoned and awakened within them."[207] When provincial administrators persisted in defying him, Waldeck founded his own "Bureau for the Germanization of Eastern Peoples," presumably with funds siphoned from his family's estate.[208]

That Waldeck continued to have such undiminished faith in the success of the Re-Germanization Procedure at this late date keys us in to an incredible yet no less demonstrable truth: even as the Third Reich careened toward oblivion, the WED retained its power to inspire feelings of "racial kinship" between Germans and non-Germans. The privations imposed by an economy at war and the stark intolerance of many officials and overseers seriously damaged the program's effectiveness, but they did not cripple it. As the everyday tasks of local government multiplied during the later war years, most state and Party officials devoted less and less energy to checking in on WED candidates. But the relative absence of discord is a noteworthy trend nonetheless, and instances of amicable cohabitation obviously did not generate the same amount of paperwork as signs of trouble.

Actually, the record indicates that many of the re-Germanizables assigned to private households continued to get along reasonably well during the later war years. It certainly helped that most of them lived in the countryside and thus avoided the worst devastation of the war. In the small town of Hattenbach, for instance, Felicja Nizielska's boss told the mayor in October 1941 that he had "no complaints whatsoever about her behavior or work performance"; after canvassing the opinions of her neighbors, the mayor himself verified that Felicja had "comported herself very well" in a missive to the Landrat of Hersfeld dated April 20, 1942; the Landrat passed on a similarly laudatory review to the Gestapo in Kassel on February 12, 1943.[209] The story was much the same elsewhere in Hesse. After a

[206] BA R 59/45/18-19: "Mitteilungen des Hauptamtes für Volkstumsfragen," unsigned, July 1943.

[207] HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 177-178: Waldeck to Landräte, Regierungspräsidenten, and Bürgermeistern in Hesse, April 20, 1944.

[208] Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat. Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Hefte, 1946), 296.

[209] These documents can be found in HStM 180 Hersfeld, Nr. A 2772.

"renewed investigation" in July 1943, the Landrat of Ziegenhain announced, "the families in this district continue to demonstrate that they are eminently suitable for re-Germanization," while his counterpart in Fulda was particularly pleased with the "extraordinarily pro-German attitude" of the Slovenian families in the area.[210] With respect to the Betriebsführer in Heppenheim, the chief gendarme assured superiors in June 1944 that "So far no grievances have been voiced concerning poor treatment… The accommodations provided by the employers are unimpeachable."[211] In the Westphalian town of Düren, the Landrat submitted an even more encouraging report the previous May: "According to the observations of local authorities, there is nothing disadvantageous to note about these Germanizable persons. They do not engage in any interactions with non-Germanizable Poles, and there are no indications of any inconveniences or disagreements between them and their managers… In light of these facts, it can be assumed that the Germanizables deployed here desire in good faith to be incorporated into the *Volksgemeinschaft*."[212] That September, a gendarme in Lower Franconia confirmed that German civilians there were equally willing to reciprocate this "good faith" and integrate WED candidates into their community: "The villagers in Rappach speak well of them; they consider the pro-German attitude of these persons to be genuine, not mere camouflage, and believe they can be absorbed into Germandom as a result of the cultural influence of their surroundings."[213]

It would be easy to deny the veracity of these accounts if not for the corroboration supplied by the re-Germanizables themselves. Roman Sobkowiak freely acknowledged that membership in the WED allowed him to discover a "new identity"; having already befriended and earned the respect of many of his fellow denizens in Ulm, in 1943 he met his future wife, the daughter of a German Social Democrat politician.[214] A letter written to Dongus by Wladyslaw Mazurek in April of that year also testifies to the enduring material and psychological appeal of conformity: "I'm doing much better here than I was in Łódź, and for that I am very grateful to you. I have everything I've ever wanted, and can now truly say with pride that I am a child of Germany."[215] Yet nothing conveys the depth of this sentiment more powerfully than the remarkable number of re-Germanizable Poles who signed up to fight and die for the National Socialist "New Order" even though they were exempt from military conscription. So it was that Czeslaus Gross enlisted in April 1943, declaring in a letter to the Landrat of Biberach that he had always

[210] HStM 180 Ziegenhain, Nr. 7072: Landrat Ziegenhain to Gestapo Kassel, July 12, 1943; HStM 180 Fulda, Nr. 6133, Bd. 318: Landrat Fulda to Gestapo Kassel, January 6, 1944.
[211] HStW G 15 Heppenheim, J 991, Bd. 6: Landrat Bergstrasse to Gestapo Darmstadt, June 19, 1944.
[212] LNWD Reg. Aachen, BR 0005, Nr. 19996, Bd. 150: Landrat Düren to Regierungspräsident Aachen, May 18, 1944.
[213] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11374: Gendarmerie Mömbris to Landrat Alzenau, September 23, 1944.
[214] Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig*, 8-9.
[215] 5/35/148: Mazurek, 4.26.43.

thought of himself as a German and wanted to prove his commitment to *Volk* and fatherland at the front.[216]

All of these examples show that the Nazis had more than enough evidence with which to validate their confidence that the time had come to move forward with naturalization. It was in the spring and summer of 1943 that re-Germanizables from Western Europe and Slovenia received "conditional state subjecthood" via the EWZ (see Chapter Six).[217] The Poles came next. On April 24, 1943, the Interior Ministry unveiled the twelfth amendment to the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935, which created a legislative basis to confer provisional citizenship upon WED candidates from the incorporated eastern territories.[218] Commenting on this edict a little over a year later, one RuSHA employee was quick to touted what he regarded as its transformational implications for Germany and the wider world: "If we considered ourselves to be bearers and prophets of racial thought, and to seek to emphasize its significance for the community of nations, then the WED procedure gives our National Socialist conception of the state a new orientation rooted in the unity of blood and soil."[219] Yet even then Himmler's race and resettlement experts were unsatisfied with existing statutes and sought to push the envelope further. This desire formed the crux of a synopsis on the Re-Germanization Procedure (the last of its kind) composed on May 18, 1944 by Ermin Künzel – the man who had arguably masterminded the program's inauguration back in 1940.

Künzel began by admitting that "the treatment of re-Germanizable persons in everyday life has often been very poor," though he mainly credited this "malfunctioning" to the ignorance of governmental officials in the provinces who had "no knowledge of the core idea behind the re-Germanization of lost German blood or the ongoing progress of the procedure." Yet what truly concerned him was the possibility that bureaucratic red-tape would alienate people who "have already after several years merged into Germandom and now have the understandable desire to be recognized as German citizens." For that reason, he advocated a streamlined protocol for enfranchisement that would empower WED candidates to enjoy greater social, political, and economic benefits: "If re-Germanizables are earmarked for the quickest possible entry into the German ethnic community, then they must be placed in a higher stratum." One

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[216] See the correspondence on Gross in StS Wü 65/5 T3, Nr. 216. A considerable number of ethnic Germans also continued to volunteer for the Wehrmacht in 1944-1945; see Bergen, "The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe," 110.

[217] BA NS 2/152/128-130: Hildebrandt, "Anordnung über die Verleihung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf an Elsässer, Lothringer und Luxemburger," August 5, 1943; BA R 59/57/3-4: "Vermerk über die Sitzung im Stabshauptamt betr. Einbürgerung und Durchschleusung der abgesiedelten eindeutschungsfähigen Slowenen," unsigned, January 12, 1943.

[218] Majer, *Fremdvölkische im Dritten Reich*, 122-123. To be sure, the SS tacked on a number of additional stipulations. Re-Germanizable Poles could only apply for "conditional state subjecthood" after spending at least one year in the Reich. They also had to obtain the consent of the responsible HSSPF, and the conferral of provisional nationality took place not through the EWZ, but the DVL offices in the subject's place of origin in western Poland; see USHMMA 15.007M/10/125/170-171: Klinger to Greifelt, November 17, 1942; BA R 59/45/18-19: "Mitteilungen des Hauptamtes für Volkstumsfragen," unsigned, July 1943; BA NS 19/150/61-62: Creutz to Brandt, February 20, 1943.

[219] BA R 186/11: Hämmerlein, "Staat und Rasse," June 1944.

could not realistically presume to "detach a German-blooded intelligentsia" from its "foreign body politic," he pointed out, without at least offering the opportunity to attain a comparable station in life. In the end, however, Künzel did not really envision the key to re-Germanization in terms of jurisprudence; he viewed it as a matter of public relations. While acknowledging that an "advertisement" of the WED might produce "unwelcome" outcomes, he nevertheless recommended "disseminating information about the procedure to the public in an appropriate format." This process of "enlightenment" would make the integration of "racially valuable foreigners" far more intelligible and acceptable to the citizenry, all the while putting out the word to potential initiates themselves. Although delighted by the sizable growth of the WED in preceding years, Künzel maintained that many eligible non-Germans "know nothing of this possibility for a swift naturalization" and reminded his colleagues that the "racially superior" scions of an "anti-German national elite" could "obviously not be expected to come forward on their own." In addition to raising awareness among foreigners, German civilians would also be called upon to hunt for "good blood" on their own, so that "all those who come into contact with ethnic aliens in the course of their daily lives will sponsor the racial evaluation of these persons."[220]

With the Allies primed to invade the German homeland, of course, most people had far more important things to worry about, and even some of the most dedicated Nazis shied away from contributing to the WED when push came to shove. Thus we have the story of Baron Adolf von Oeynhausen and the Sauter sisters. On November 6, 1944, Himmler wrote to Oeynhausen with a proposition "to employ two Polish women of German stock" in his household: Christine and Luise Sauter. Earlier that year, the Reichsführer-SS had personally ordered that these two girls be confined to Ravensbrück for having renounced their German heritage, though he also instructed the commandant there to "bring a humane influence to bear so as to win them back for Germandom." After six months in the KZ, Christine and Luise changed their minds and applied for German citizenship. Heartened by this turnaround, Himmler decided to release them "in order to further their immersion in the German way of life." Upon learning of Himmler's proffered "gift," however, Oeynhausen demurred. In a reply dated November 9, 1944, he informed the Reichsführer-SS that his estate was already jam-packed with refugees, more of whom would arrive after the impending assault on Hildesheim. But the Baron was also alarmed by the fact that "both sisters have not developed a strong inner devotion to Germandom," and he feared that their presence would provoke a "fanatical reaction" on the part of the twenty-three Polish farmhands who tended his fields. In circumstances that already bordered on anarchic, he intimated, it would be wholly foolish to invite open insurrection.[221] Although clearly tinged with the fanciful anxieties that animated the myth of "lost German blood," Oeynhausen's trepidation was actually not all that

[220] BA R 186/11: Künzel, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen zum Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren," May 18, 1944.
[221] BA NS 19/1380/2-3: Brandt to Oeynhausen, November 9, 1944; ITS 0.1/3791446: Oeynhausen to Brandt, November 20, 1944.

illogical. In early April 1945, in Oldenburg (which had already been cut off by the British), the wife of Eignungsprüfer Hans Rihl – the principal race examiner of the *Aktion Zamosc*, now presumed dead – begged her husband's colleagues to do something about the re-Germanizable housemaid quartered in her home. The girl's "extremely rebellious" behavior allegedly posed a "significant danger to the family" and scared Frau Rihl enough to predict that she would soon lead subaltern laborers deployed in the area on a campaign of violent retribution against their former German masters – herself included.[222]

Yet even in the midst of total military and political collapse, there were still some German citizens who supported the mission of "racial consolidation," still some non-Germans who strove to gain admission into the "ethnic community," and still some Nazis who remained responsive to stimuli from below. On December 2, 1944, a veterinarian by the name of Dr. Eigendorf penned a message to RuS-Führer Georg Rödel in which he fervently sponsored the Germanization of nineteen year old Walentina Wigowskaja, a native of the Crimea. Eigendorf was certainly not untouched by racial prejudice or paternalistic sexism. "In the beginning, it was very difficult to get Wigowskaja to do regular housework," he recalled in a haughty tone, "because she was never encouraged to perform systematic labor in her own home." He described her as "a big unruly child who likes to fill her head with the most fantastic nonsense and constantly requires a firm hand." But Eigendorf was also deeply impressed with Walentina's knack for the demeanor of a "proper" German woman: "She has grown accustomed to our large household in an astonishingly brief period of time, and now handles the manifold tasks we assign her to our complete satisfaction. She is hard-working, honest, devoted, always friendly, and ready at all times to help. She is eager to learn, speaks German very well, and has both the will and the aptitude to become an efficient Hausfrau in the German sense with further guidance and good role models." What made Eigendorf even more enthusiastic (if also somewhat perplexed), was the zeal with which Walentina denied her native cultural upbringing: "It is surprising to us, and actually incomprehensible, to see how completely and honestly she endeavors to disavow everything Russian… Her greatest wish and aspiration is to be officially Germanized soon."[223] It did not take long for Walentina's "wish" to come true. On December 19, 1944, a physician at the Public Health Office in Dillkreis declared her to be "physically and mentally sound" and free of all "hereditary illnesses" and "alien racial elements." "In my opinion," the examiner declared, "there are no obstacles to Germanization."[224]

For whatever reason – perhaps to evade repatriation to the Soviet Union – Walentina wanted to become a German despite the enormous disadvantages that would soon accrue to that title. Baffling though it may seem, she was not alone in this respect. Gretel Brandt, also a young housemaid from Ukraine, had first submitted an application to join the WED in April 1944, and her mistress, Frau Glotz,

[222] BA NS 2/149/3: Heider to Bassewitz-Behr, April 3, 1945.
[223] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11377: Eigendorf to Rödel, December 2, 1944.
[224] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11377: Staatliche Gesundheitsamt to Stroop, December 19, 1944.

vouched for her candidacy in language highly similar to that used by Eigendorf: "Like most female eastern workers, Gretel lacked all knowledge of housework and had to learn everything from the ground up. Nevertheless, she is very compliant and interested in everything that's going on. She speaks German quite well. As far as I can tell, she has chosen to side with Germandom and is absolutely against Bolshevism. On these grounds, I would advocate Germanization."[225] When almost a whole year went by without any response, however, Gretel herself showed up at the office of an NSDAP functionary in early March 1945 to inquire about the status of her request and find out when it would be ratified. Although the same man had assessed her "political reliability" the previous August, he could not provide Gretel with an answer because Rödel and Stroop seem to have lost track of her file.[226]

A case involving another pair of sisters, Danuta and Johanna Wierzejska, offers a further example of this seemingly inexplicable loyalty to the Nazi cause, as well as a portal into the conceptual vortex of racial classification as an ontological phenomenon. The Wierzejskas underwent EWZ screening in Lublin during the winter of 1943-1944. Johanna obtained recognition as an ethnic German, Danuta did not, yet both somehow ended up at the same location in Germany, working as domestic servants in Arolsen at the home of Joachim Richter, commander of the 5th SS Panzer Division "Viking." Because Danuta was not listed in the regional inventory of WED candidates, the RuS-Führer for SS-District Fulda-Werra evaluated her racial makeup in March 1944 at Richter's behest, afterwards forwarding the results to Łódź for certification. That is when the problems began. The staff leader at the Aussenstelle, Hans Rihl, did find a Danuta Wierzejska registered as an "ethnic alien; grade RuS-II" in his on-site database, but he could not be sure that this was the same individual in the photos his colleague submitted, nor could he verify that the two girls were even sisters. Danuta claimed that the commissioners in Lublin had declared her "capable of Germanization"; the VoMi and the EWZ steadfastly denied this, impugning the girl's credibility and pointing out that she was "not all that good-looking." None of this mattered to Richter, who could not understand why the EWZ would approve one sister while rebuffing the other. He sent Rihl glowing reports on the girl's exemplary conduct and demanded that he settle the issue once and for all. "I have had ample opportunity to get to know Danuta," he wrote in July 1944, "and in my opinion she is definitely German." Given the existence of "contradictory findings," however, Rihl stipulated that he would not endorse her application until he had a chance to appraise the entire family. The proceedings went on and on for months, churning up a voluminous correspondence that spawned even more complications and eventually dragged in Schwalm and Dongus – by then the effective leaders of the RuSHA.[227]

[225] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11372: Glotz to Waldeck, April 24, 1944.
[226] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11372: Kugel to Stroop, March 2, 1945.
[227] See the lengthy correspondence on these two women in USHMMA 15.021M/6/38/77-105.

Was Danuta Wierzejska an impostor? Or was this just a mind-boggling case of mistaken identity? The truth will probably never be known; the Nazis themselves never figured it out. What is more important than a clear-cut answer is how the episode illustrates the confusing jumble of contradictory perspectives, mixed motives, and mutual manipulation that went into the construction of the Nazi racial taxonomy – an almost impenetrable labyrinth of enigmas with enough tedium and nuance to make even the most meticulous heads spin. It also once again raises the question of why these men would lavish so much time and energy on what looks like little more than trivia in the grand scheme of things. We should neither ignore the force of bureaucratic inertia nor discount the reflex of self-preservation; after all, it behooved the race inspectors to engross themselves in endless investigations and mountains of paperwork when the alternative was active service at the front. Nor should we forget that adhering to the same monotonous routine enabled them to bury their heads in the sand and avoid coming to grips with the advent of their worst nightmares. But it would also be wholly misleading to disregard the intoxicating vibe baked into the process of making race "real," the sensation of otherworldly power that flowed from the praxis of transforming vague yet stirring concepts into flesh-and-blood avatars. The Eignungsprüfer kept the ritual going because they enjoyed it, convinced as they were that every single person "of good blood" they "reclaimed" would make the German nation that much stronger in the future. Yet even when managed from a distance, sorting and cataloging human beings was rarely a one-sided exercise. These encounters between state and non-state actors in late 1944 and early 1945 accentuate the synergy that had fueled the engine of Nazi Germanization policy from the very beginning. It is this dynamic that explains why HSSPF Bassewitz-Behr enrolled a new group of candidates into the WED on January 5, 1945, why the RKF elected to accelerate the placement of re-Germanizable Slovenes in private households two days later (the VoMi was eager to reduce overcrowding within its camps in any case), and why HSSPF Stroop undertook to procure food and clothing for inductees under his care the day after that by stressing the following imperative in a letter to the Landrat of Bergstrasse: "The Reichsführer-SS has ordered that families and individuals of foreign ethnicity must be extracted from their homelands… It is still our task to regain these people for Germandom."[228]

RuS-Führer Georg Rödel and his assistant, Reinhold Ratzeburg, would not abandon this mission either, and their activities in Hesse and the Rhineland during the early months of 1945 are as good a place as any to end on. Having performed examinations on a young Lithuanian woman and her Ukrainian lover at the Public Health Office in Bad Homburg on January 21, 1945, Ratzeburg praised the former's "thoroughly German impression" and the latter's "good overall appearance" and "willingness to be Germanized." A few days later, he was in Dillenburg screening two Estonian girls who "very much want

[228] StO Best. 136, Nr. 19592: Bassewitz-Behr to Regierungspräsident Oldenburg, January 5, 1945; BA R 59/57/54: Brückner to Bethge, January 7, 1945; HStW G 15 Heppenheim, J 991, Bd. 2: Stroop to Landrat Bergstrasse, January 8, 1945.

to be German" and corresponded "quite closely to the racial phenotype of the German *Volk*." Despite heavy snowfall and repeated train delays (the result of intense Allied bombing), Ratzeburg then traveled to Gelnhausen on January 26, where he admitted a "high-value" Polish family into the WED and reported cheerfully that "The sons want to be SS men!"[229] By early February, he was on the move again. In Heppenheim, he evaluated a handful of women from Belarus, and though disappointed that three of them "place little value on re-Germanization," he was thrilled that the other two were "confident in the victory of Germany and want to be included in the WED-Procedure."[230] In the meantime, Rödel had also taken it upon himself to carry on the "recovery" of "lost German blood." In late January, he blithely proposed a scheme whereby "racially valuable foreign children" housed in local NSV orphanages would be naturalized en masse, especially those of Croatian descent. If their mothers ever turned up, he remarked casually, "we can simply refuse to give the children back."[231]

Until the very end, Rödel, like his confederates, remained transfixed by the prospect of demographic rebirth and simultaneously terrified by the nightmarish scenario of foreign inundation, as his verdict in the case of Richard Drapsala and Hedwig Sikora displays with unsettling precision. Another pair of young lovers brought together by the circumstances of war, Richard and Hedwig applied to join the Re-Germanization Procedure as man and wife after their employer discovered she was pregnant. A subsequent appraisal revealed that both of them belonged in category RuS-II. Yet while local Nazi officials had only positive things to say about Richard, they cast all sorts of aspersions on Hedwig's character, complaining that she "flaunts her Polishness at every opportunity," denigrating her as "deceitful, false, and treacherous, like all Poles," and insinuating that Richard might not even be the child's real father. According to various sources, Hedwig exerted a "strong, adverse effect" on Richard, who was in turn "totally enthralled by this fanatical Polish woman."[232] In a nutshell, Rödel gathered the stereotypical portrait of a devious, wanton, domineering harpy – the Slavic Flood incarnate – which led him to reckon it "advisable" to "transfer Sikora where she can exercise no further influence." He was not about to help cultivate a new generation of "renegades": "The child should be separated from its mother… If this is not possible, then I have no interest in the child and it should be treated as an alien."[233] The RuS-Führer advocated a similar hard line with respect to Edward and Jadwiga Lisiak. After the Lisiaks resisted entry into the WED in February 1945, he contacted NSDAP and police functionaries and asked them to apply pressure; if they still refused to play ball, he hinted, then much harsher methods would have to be considered. In one of his last communiqués, Rödel captured the quintessential logic of

[229] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7360, Bd. 1-2: Ratzeburg, "Dienstbericht vom 20.1.1945 bis zum 27.1.1945," January 28, 1945.
[230] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 31-32: Ratzeburg, "Dienstbericht vom 2.2.1945 bis zum 11.2.1945," February 12, 1945.
[231] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7359, Bd. 20: Rödel to Dongus, January 24, 1945.
[232] See the correspondence on this case in HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7362.
[233] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7324: Rödel to Stroop, January 5, 1945; HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 7324: Rödel to NSV Frankfurt am Main, January 8, 1945.

Nazi Germanization policy during the final terrible years of the Second World War when he uttered the following to a colleague in Frankfurt am Main: "We have not the slightest intention of leaving behind human material such as this, especially in light of the available German blood quotient. In my view, such cases leave us with only two possibilities: either annihilation, or absorption into Germandom."[234]

[234] HStW Abt. 483, Nr. 11374: Rödel to Gauamtsleiter für Volkstumsfragen Frankfurt am Main, February 15, 1945.

Conclusion

"No one loves armed missionaries; the first lesson of nature and prudence is to repulse them as enemies."

–Maximilien Robespierre

"The living expression of the nation is the collective consciousness in motion of the entire people."

–Frantz Fanon

The "hunt for good blood" had a long afterlife, and the story of the Re-Germanization Procedure did not end with the Second World War. For nearly all WED candidates, in fact, the fall of the Third Reich and the transition to peace brought a whole new set of challenges and ordeals. Unacquainted with the fine points of the Nazis' ethnic and racial taxonomy, Allied authorities often thought these people were Volksdeutsche and thus denied them the assistance provided to foreign forced laborers by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).[1] In most cases, however, the re-Germanizables now became "displaced persons" (DPs), joining millions of other civilians within the huge network of refugee camps established by the various occupation regimes in the late spring and summer of 1945. By then, some had been so debilitated by recent hardships that there was little their liberators could do to save them. Stefan Alama was barely conscious when British troops found him languishing in a make-shift prison outside Paderborn in April; although they conveyed him to a nearby hospital, Stefan never recovered from the deprivation he suffered in captivity and finally succumbed on March 3, 1946.[2] As one might expect, those who survived were usually all too happy to return to their native soil and pick up where they had left off before the war. Upon his release from Dachau, for instance, Adolf Krieps made his way back to Luxembourg and resumed his previous political career.[3] While some individuals and families endured long stints in the DP camps, others were repatriated within months of the German surrender – that is, if they had not already voted with their feet and simply walked back home or hitched a ride on a passing transport.[4] Be that as it may, there were many former WED candidates who dreaded what might await them in their lands of origin, and rightly so. It was not just the dismal specter of life under communist rule that distressed those who hailed from areas controlled by the Soviets; the more

[1] This was because local German records often listed them as Volksdeutsche, or because Allied personnel were unfamiliar with the designation *eindeutschungsfähig*; see the files on Margarete Brandt, Genowefa Dlubak, and Wanda Marciniak in ITS 0.1/72039525, 0.1/101004546, and 0.1/97865631. For an overview on the mandate of the UNRRA as well as how this process worked, see Jennifer Rodgers, "From the 'Archive of Horrors' to the 'Shop Window of Democracy': The International Tracing Service, 1942-2013," (PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2014).

[2] ITS 0.1/12953469: ITS Index Card on Stefan Alama.

[3] ITS 0.1/29091698: ITS Index Card on Adolf Krieps.

[4] See, for instance, the ITS index cards on Eugenia Wojcik and Leon Zawadzki, who left for Poland as early as August and September 1945, respectively, in ITS 0.1/50026387 and 0.1/35964107. Also see the A.E.F. Assembly Center Registration Card for Czeslaw Fabiszak, who returned to Poland on his own in November 1945, in ITS 3.1.1.1/20295933. Jan Nowakowski, on the other hand, did not leave the DP camp in Flossenbürg until June 7, 1947, and Jadwiga Chmurzynska remained in Bremerhaven until September 11, 1948; see ITS 3.1.1.1/44353657 and 0.1/16966883.

pressing issue was the likelihood that their fellow compatriots would look upon them as traitors and punish them accordingly.[5] Former Soviet nationals had the most to fear by far, given that Stalin condemned hundreds of thousands of Ostarbeiter and Red Army POWs to the Gulag as supposed fascist sympathizers. But the prospect of violent retribution did not just apply to countries destined to fall behind the Iron Curtain in the near future.[6] All across Western Europe, comparable numbers of alleged collaborators were assaulted, humiliated, ostracized, imprisoned, or sentenced to death in the weeks and months that followed the cessation of hostilities.[7]

In light of these circumstances, it is little wonder that erstwhile re-Germanizables often opted for permanent exile and emigrated overseas when given the chance to do so. Alfons Krolikowski, Zygmunt Blaut, and Josef Androjna, for example, relocated to the Midwestern United States in 1949-1950, whereas Henryk Borowski and Kazimiera Drogon settled in Australia around the same time.[8] After spending two hellish years in Buchenwald – which almost certainly would have exonerated him – and two more confined to a DP camp near Regensburg, Stanislaw Furmanek left for Canada on August 1, 1947.[9] Feliks Grzelka took up residence in Argentina, where he lived a long and fruitful life as a shopkeeper in Buenos Aires and kept his family in the dark about his wartime experiences; his wife and son did not learn of Feliks' admission into the WED and internment in Dachau until they stumbled across a lengthy correspondence with the International Red Cross concerning financial compensation hidden among his papers after he passed away in 1997.[10] What may seem odd, on the other hand, is that many people chose to stay in Germany. This was particularly true of foreign-born children whom the Nazis had kidnapped. One UNRRA official encountered scores of youngsters from Poland and Yugoslavia who had "renounced their country, language, and culture and vehemently declared that they were Germans." She also noticed that "Russian and Ukrainian children and many others, while they have not reached this stage of Germanization, have nevertheless been completely poisoned against their own countries and will not countenance a return to the land of their birth."[11] Most of the younger ones, of course, had been raised to think of themselves as Germans and had little to no memory of anything that preceded their time in the Reich, but even those who did remember where they originally came from often had no desire to part

[5] With regard to Yugoslavia, see Karl Stuhlpfarrer, "Umsiedlungen und Deportationen während des zweiten Weltkriegs," in *Pregon koroških Slovencev – Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942-2002*, ed. Augustin Malle (Klagenfurt: Drava, 2002), 131.

[6] Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 98. Also see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic, 2010), 328, 392.

[7] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 42, 45-46.

[8] ITS 0.1/29170607: ITS Index Card on Alfons Krolikowski; ITS 0.1/14726752: ITS Index Card on Zygmunt Blaut; ITS 0.1/13310410: A.E.F. Assembly Center Registration Card for Josef Androjna; ITS 0.1/15999039: A.E.F. Assembly Center Registration Card for Henryk Borowski; ITS 3.1.1.1/19480475: ITS Index Card on Kazimiera Drogon.

[9] ITS 0.1/21502968: ITS Index Card on Stanislaw Furmanek.

[10] ITS 3.2.1.1/90040730-731: Grzelka to ITS Arolsen, January 11, 1990; ITS 3.2.1.1/90040773-774: International Tracing Service to Grzelka (Alejandro), September 27, 2010.

[11] Lynn H. Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 479.

ways with loving German caretakers whom they regarded as their true parents. In these cases, trying to determine what lay in the "best interests" of the child presented Allied social workers with an agonizing moral dilemma that offered no truly acceptable or clear-cut solution.[12] Despite intense pressure from postwar governments in East-Central Europe to retrieve abductees before they disappeared forever, more than a few UNRRA administrators allowed them to remain with their German guardians indefinitely, even when their natural relatives turned up and filed for custody. It is highly probable that the motive here was to keep these youths from falling into the hands of the communists. In other instances, however, they repossessed children by force and shipped them back home literally kicking and screaming.[13]

While a considerable number of WED candidates did whatever they could to avoid having to leave Germany, many civilians whom the Nazis had classified as Germans had no choice but to go there. As scores of refugees traversed the eastern border of the Allied occupation zones on their way homeward – voluntarily or otherwise – an even larger mass of humanity poured across the same frontier in the opposite direction. The evacuations carried out during the German retreat of 1944-1945 thus became the first stage of a demographic upheaval the likes of which the continent had never seen: the expulsion of an estimated twelve million Volksdeutsche from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, and the western rim of the reconstituted Soviet Union – a substantial portion of whom were not German.[14] On September 14, 1945, to take one example, Czech militias in the Sudetenland ousted Zdzislaw Gabriel, a re-Germanizable Pole, alongside the family he worked for and every other German living in the village of Christelschlag (soon renamed Křišťanovice).[15] Long before the deportations finally ceased in 1950, however, the nationalist and communist regimes that assumed power in these countries started to worry about exactly the same problem that had confronted the Nazis when they embarked on a campaign of ethnic cleansing in the autumn of 1939. As one prominent Czech journalist explained in April 1946, "This aim has great political value for our future – on one condition, however: that our numerical strength does not stop growing, but on the contrary continues to increase. It is undoubtedly a question of life and death for us Czechs; to ensure the social, economic, and moral preconditions for biological expansion is one of the main tasks of our state policy." Czechoslovak premier Zdeněk Fierlinger implored his countrymen to

[12] Ibid., 502-503. Also see the interview with Gitta Sereny on her experiences as a young UNRRA welfare officer after the war in "Stolen Children," *Talk Magazine*, November 1999.

[13] Ines Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität. Die gewaltsame "Eindeutschung" von polnischen Kindern in der NS-Zeit* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), 211, 220. For background on the search for missing children, see Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[14] There are a number of stellar works on this topic; see Wolfgang Benz, *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten. Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1985); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); R.M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012). There is also an excellent overview on the expulsion of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia in Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 108-138.

[15] ITS 4.1.2.13/81797336: Harvey to ITS Branch Esslingen, November 13, 1948.

adopt a highly similar perspective: "We want to and must save for our nation every drop of honorable Czech blood." His Interior Minister likewise insisted, "We are not a nation large enough to waste our own blood… Even large nations do not indulge in such a luxury."[16]

Their reaction to this potential "crisis" was also eerily reminiscent of National Socialist theory and practice. On August 2, 1945, in spite of vociferous protests from his supporters, President Edvard Beneš released a decree that permitted the roughly three hundred thousand Czech-speakers who had become German citizens during the war to apply for "re-naturalization" (just under half of them complied), reasoning that most had only outwardly abandoned their "true" national heritage "under threat of denunciation or particular circumstances deemed exceptional."[17] Once again, partners in ethnically mixed marriages attracted especially invasive scrutiny. Throughout the course of the expulsions, state officials prevented Czech women from following their German husbands into exile and compelled them to sue for divorce by threatening to confiscate their children, some of whom subsequently underwent evaluations of their "biological quality." At any rate, regardless of who they had married, Czechs who sought reinstatement almost invariably had to submit to a preliminary appraisal of their "political and ethnic reliability" conducted by the police.[18]

An even more aggressive and wide-ranging process of "verification" and "de-Germanization" took place in Poland, above all in the huge swathes of German territory east of the Oder and Neisse rivers that Allied leaders awarded to the Poles in the summer of 1945.[19] In these "recovered western provinces" – East Prussia, Pomerania, Lower Silesia, and eastern Brandenburg – none of which had ever belonged to the interwar Polish Republic, around three million so-called "autochthons" were largely spared banishment due to the rationale that "a considerable percentage of the families there are doubtlessly of Polish origin, yet have been under the influence of Germanization for centuries and should therefore be reclaimed for the Polish nation."[20] In pursuit of this goal, specially appointed state commissions presided over a classificatory schema that sorted the indigenous population according to descent, language, and political attitude – criteria occasionally delineated in overtly racist terminology. The extent to which this endeavor emulated the conventions of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* is truly astounding. Subjects whom the examiners labeled "Germans of Polish ancestry" would not receive full civic enfranchisement, property compensation, or freedom of mobility until after they had "proven themselves worthy of Polish

[16] These three quotes as well as the additional information come from Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 245.

[17] Ibid., 244. For further information, see Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 228-266.

[18] Michal Šimůnek, "Race, Heredity, and Nationality: Children in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1945," in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, eds. Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen (New York: Berg, 2005), 201-202.

[19] Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles: Communism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 150-186.

[20] Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1998), 301-302.

citizenship," and those considered untrustworthy were sometimes resettled to "old Polish environs" for the purpose of a "speedy assimilation" – even though the ongoing eviction of Germans created a disastrous manpower shortage that the influx of colonists from eastern Poland could not offset. In the meantime, the "autochthons" were (technically) entitled to equal pay and favorable working conditions as well as access to Polish cultural and social institutions so as "to obviate anything that might incite antipathy toward Polish society or impede their Polonization."[21]

This system was also introduced in regions the Germans had annexed to the Reich in 1939 – the one-time incorporated eastern territories – where state commissioners and their local accomplices found it no less difficult to fabricate stable ethnic distinctions than the Nazis had. While some bilingual yet otherwise ardent Polish patriots ended up being branded as turncoats and deported (especially if they were Protestant), many avowed Volksdeutsche qualified for "rehabilitation" even when they openly flaunted their Germanness.[22] Without any kind of objective framework to guide them, most arbiters on the ground simply relied on their own arbitrary impressions, not to mention the word of the people they intended to categorize. In Upper Silesia, for instance, some two million residents who had signed on to the Deutsche Volksliste as "Germans" during the war switched their affiliation in 1945 and thereafter became "Poles."[23] What was more, forced laborers returning from Germany did not stand above suspicion either, and Polish leaders worried that former WED candidates in particular would endanger national cohesion and internal stability unless subjected to some type of government oversight. So it was that individuals and families whom the SS had declared "capable of re-Germanization" now had to endure an analogous procedure of "re-Polonization" upon arrival in their native homeland.[24]

All of these concurrent initiatives render a striking testament to the fact that Nazi Germanization policy fit within a broader continuum of nation-building and ethnic conflict in East-Central Europe, one that antedated as well as outlived the Second World War. This was something the race and resettlement experts of the SS recognized quite clearly. As they sat in the docket at Nuremberg, accused of crimes against humanity, the various department heads of the RKFDV mustered a familiar narrative to serve as

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[21] Ibid., 297-298, 301-303, 312-313. For an excellent study on postwar Polonization as a holistic process, see Gregor Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt. Breslau 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2003. Most of the settlers who repopulated these areas came from the stretch of territory in eastern Poland known as the Kresy, which was ceded to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945.

[22] Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1944* (Berlin: Akadamie, 1987), 512; Annette Groβbongardt, "Zweierlei Erbe," in *Die Deutschen im Osten Europas. Eroberer, Siedler, Vertriebene*, eds. Annette Groβbongardt, Uwe Kluβmann, and Norbert F. Pötzl (Berlin: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2011), 168. Also see Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 310-313.

[23] James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 273.

[24] Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse*, 297-298, 319. Interestingly, a similar though far less intensive process of "re-nationalization" – in this case "Frenchification" – took place in Alsace-Lorraine after 1945; see Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 288.

the cornerstone of their collective legal defense: the myth of "lost German blood."[25] They persistently maintained that the prosecution had no right to sit in judgment of their actions, which they claimed "could only be understood on the basis of a thorough knowledge of their historical background."[26] VoMi chief Werner Lorenz justified Himmler's enterprise of racial consolidation on the following grounds: "Due to the peculiarity of Germany's historical development, people of German origin have often crossed the borders of their fatherland and migrated to foreign countries. This happened at a time when national states did not exist and the rulers of foreign countries welcomed the immigration of German colonists. The rise of national consciousness in the course of the last century meant that Germans who retained their cultural characteristics were considered outsiders and became obvious as such."[27] Fritz Schwalm elaborated on the consequences of this development when he submitted as evidence a series of monographs and newspaper articles that purported to describe the systematic Polonization of around 200,000 Germans in the vicinity of Poznań between 1855 and 1883.[28] Greifelt, for his part, framed the WED and the DVL as a natural outgrowth of the manner in which German governments had tackled the nationality question in the borderlands for more than a century.[29]

We should not categorically discard the kernel of truth that endowed these statements, self-serving though they were, with a measure of validity. Yet despite what many historians have argued since, National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* was obviously much more than just a throwback to the days of the Prussian and Austrian monarchies. In the first place, it depended on the use of violence to a degree that would have been unconscionable to the Nazis' predecessors, who may have countenanced expulsion and expropriation as a means of reversing unfavorable demographic trends (during the First World War, for instance) and occasionally even deported unwanted minorities, but never followed through on such designs or enacted population transfers on nearly the same scale. Nor did they ever contemplate imprisoning non-Germans or intimidating them with death-threats in order to convert them into Germans. One can definitely detect a through line in the long-running effort to suppress rival nationalisms in ethnically contested frontier districts, not to mention within the German interior, but the aim of

[25] Of the RKFDV officials convicted by the tribunal, the sentences were as follows: Ulrich Greifelt, life imprisonment; Rudolf Creutz, fifteen years imprisonment; Otto Hofmann, twenty-five years imprisonment; Werner Lorenz, twenty years imprisonment; Heinz Brückner, fifteen years imprisonment; Richard Hildebrandt, twenty-five years imprisonment; Fritz Schwalm, ten years imprisonment. Inge Viermetz was also indicted and tried for her role in the kidnapping operations of Lebensborn, though the court ruled that there was not enough evidence to warrant a conviction; see LOC/NMT, 165-166. Hans Ehlich, Günther Stier, and Willy Bethge escaped prosecution, even though they were called upon to testify against their former colleagues (and may have received immunity in exchange). The overwhelming majority of the RuSHA race examiners, including Bruno Schultz and Walter Dongus, never had to answer for their crimes, and some of them rose to positions of prominence in postwar West Germany; see Isabel Heinemann, "'Another Type of Perpetrator': The SS Racial Experts and Forced Population Movements in the Occupied Regions," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15, no. 3 (2001): 387-401.

[26] LOC/NMT, 1-2 [vol. V].

[27] LOC/NMT, 951.

[28] LOC/NMT, 8-10: Schwalm Defense Doc. 126: Extracts from "Testimony of the Times: Archives, Documents, and Memoirs from the History of the East" (English transcript) [vol. V].

[29] LOC/NMT, 876.

nineteenth-century *Germanisierung* did not necessitate outright cultural genocide or the total erasure of a subject's native cultural identity. By the same token, while the prescribed vehicles and indices of assimilation (language, political allegiance, communal solidarity, domestic customs) remained roughly the same from the Kaiserreich right on through the Third Reich, the goals were fundamentally different. The National Socialists envisioned Germanization as nothing less than a revolutionary instrument for the organic destruction of foreign nations and the biological enhancement of the German *Volk*. Such a conception certainly emerged in more muted variants before Hitler came to power, but only in 1939-1940 did it become the content of official policy.

Equally as important, it was race, not nationality, which constituted the central organizing principle of human classification in Nazi-occupied Europe, even if ethnic culture and political orientation sometimes played a determinative role as well. Although German citizenship statutes had traditionally revolved around patrilineal descent (at least as of 1913), they did not exclude people on the basis of ethnicity or religion, let alone race.[30] The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 changed all that, establishing a juridical typology that shunned Jews, "Gypsies," and non-Europeans (including whites with a supposed "alien blood-share"), yet also codified an inclusive theory of racial kinship that superseded national boundaries. The Second World War supplied an opportunity to stretch this model to its logical conclusion. Whether speaking of Poland or Czechoslovakia, France or Luxembourg, Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union, the National Socialist regime consistently divided conquered populations into "persons of German or kindred blood" on the one hand and "racial aliens" on the other – and it is crucial to remember that the latter usually comprised a majority. No matter which agency was in charge, recognition as an ethnic German, a "person of German descent," or a re-Germanizable almost always turned on notions of ancestry, physical appearance, hereditary value, or some combination of the three – which is precisely why these categories frequently overlapped with one another. It has often been suggested that officials in the occupied territories reverted to cultural definitions of Germanness as a more practical alternative to racial ones, or that they simply accepted declarations of fealty as a sufficient condition for membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Yet as we have seen time and again, the Nazis routinely embraced "racially valuable" subjects who did *not* consider themselves to be German and specifically strove to "recover" those who posed an active danger to political security. The whole purpose of Germanization policy was to integrate these people first so as to convince them to adopt German cultural forms and become loyal devotees of the *völkisch* state in the future, not the other way around.

This unprecedented emphasis on manufacturing a racial taxonomy derived from continuities with the wider milieu of European colonialism, from a utopian belief that the social edifice of humanity could

[30] Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschliessen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 324-325.

and should be arranged according to a "natural" hierarchy of biological "quality." As he read his closing statement before the Allied Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Otto Hofmann was quick to highlight the parallels that linked the motives and methodology of the RuSHA to systems of apartheid all over the world, past and present: "Our deliberations and concerns," he stated, "were not dissimilar from those which have induced other states to forbid social relations and sexual intercourse between members of their race and people of a different kind."[31] This assertion keys us into a long-term macrohistorical trend that the Nazis advanced far more radically than anyone else, yet did not invent: a gradual racialization of European ethnic groups animated by the intersecting discourses of nationalism and white supremacy. What Hofmann did not mention, and probably did not consciously realize, however, was that the same horror aroused by the prospect of inter-ethnic mingling and miscegenation paradoxically generated the impulse to absorb foreign peoples into the national corpus – which in turn intensified the specter of biological decay and cultural dissolution. The psychological potency behind the reclamation of "lost German blood" lay in its ambivalence as a fetish that could not be fulfilled, an irredenta that tapped into fantasies of imperial hegemony and anxieties of civilizational decline yet never delivered on its promised telos of transforming the menacing Other into an affirmational image of the Self. This dynamic goes a long way toward explaining the simultaneously idealistic and paranoid mentality of the race examiners, though it also provides a frame of reference for grasping why the missionary zeal of many Nazi functionaries and German hosts on the ground turned to frustration when WED candidates did not seem to fit in, when they refused to conform, when they fought back. The Re-Germanization Procedure in its domestic setting was a microcosm of the environment the Nazis replicated across the continent, a matrix in which the brutality they employed to force people into the body politic fed an unparalleled surge of mutual resentment, mistrust, and hatred between Germans and non-Germans. In this sense, National Socialist *Volkstumspolitik* must be understood not just as a continuation of earlier drives for ethnic homogeneity within Europe, but as a reflexive corollary of the structural violence instituted to eradicate aboriginal cultures throughout the overseas colonial realm.

A major reason why the Re-Germanization Procedure backfired, however, was simply because the six-year period that preceded the war did not afford enough time to instill Germans with the level of racial consciousness required to look past ethnic differences in the short term. The broad foundations underlying xenophobia toward outsiders during this period are hard to delineate with textbook definitions of racism, and we should not be too quick to ascribe the cruelty of many supervisors to vulgar prejudice or to the boomerang effect of ideological indoctrination. As they set out to excommunicate WED candidates from German society (or incorporate them, for that matter), the Betriebsführer invoked an array of traditions, cultural attitudes, and social mores that had garnered a deeply rooted resonance long

[31] LOC/NMT, 1157. This was almost certainly an indirect reference to Jim Crow legislation in the United States.

before the coming of the Third Reich. These referents only possessed the individualized meanings that contemporaries gave to them. Nevertheless, if the agenda of racial imperialism more or less won out over a circumscribed focus on *Volk* within the fraught internal debates of the National Socialist regime, the rampant ethnocentrism of ordinary Germans upended this equation by way of osmosis, rippling outward and upward through the channels of state power at center and periphery until they swelled into a seemingly insurmountable wave of public outcry. This development was, to say the least, massively destabilizing. Once it became apparent that supposedly innate bonds of racial affinity had not manifested themselves in actual camaraderie on either side, the consequent response tore a gaping rupture in the fabric of Nazi ideology. While the behavior of some "unfit" candidates could be written off as a symptom of hereditary inferiority, the "exclusion procedure" and the shift toward kidnapping children automatically implied that one's "accidental" ethnic affiliation could not be overcome, that *Volk* trumped race, and that, in the end, biology did not determine destiny. The Nazis came to believe that they often had to destroy "lost German blood" in order to save it, but they did not arrive at this conclusion on their own. Although some citizens endorsed racial-anthropological categories and welcomed the re-Germanizables with open arms, others rejected them in favor of a restrictive paradigm of national identity based on ethnic and cultural chauvinism. In each case, non-state actors at the grassroots level were able to exercise a decisive bottom-up influence over the trajectory of National Socialist policy-making and thus helped shape the continent-wide project of ethno-racial classification at home and abroad.

This reciprocal dialogue demonstrates quite emphatically that, on the whole, race ironically offered a far more inclusive framework of community-building than ethnic affiliation. It is worth noting here that this mode of inclusivity should not be confused with our present-day conception of multicultural tolerance. The Nazis may have offered non-Germans a pathway to citizenship, but their goodwill was always contingent upon the proviso that supplicants abandon all traces of their native ethnic background (hence the designation "conditional state subjecthood"). With that being said, the evolution of Nazi *Volkstumspolitik* does compel us to deal with the reality that German rule in occupied Europe was not solely predicated on exclusion and exterminatory violence and therefore cannot be reduced to its unquestionably inhuman and criminally destructive logic, even if that tragically proved easier to effect than its constructive or integrative dimension. Again, we must bear in mind that the number of foreign subjects whom the Nazis murdered far surpassed the quantity they admitted into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and even those whom they did accept as "ethnic comrades" often ended up being treated little better than slaves anyway. But that should not obscure the fact that they also elevated the campaign to salvage "bearers of lost German blood" and prevent them from strengthening the enemy to a plane of such high importance that it ultimately overshadowed the adverse repercussions of political subversion as well as racial pollution.

Nor should it disguise the implications to be gleaned from the arithmetic involved. All told, just shy of 100,000 individuals entered the Re-Germanization Procedure between 1940 and 1945 – 46,000 from Poland, at least 15,500 from Slovenia, 15,000 from Western Europe, 20,000 of various nationalities employed within the Reich, and approximately 3,000 from the Soviet Union.[32] Some might think it unwarranted to attach singular relevance to such a relatively small amount of people at a time when tens of millions of Europeans died and the whole world was burning. The WED, however, was just the tip of the iceberg, and as we have seen throughout the course of this study, the significance of the program extended far beyond its numerical constituency.

Even if we leave out the circa one million ethnic German resettlers whom the SS transported to the Reich and the annexed provinces surrounding its periphery, the available documentation indicates that 2.75 million inhabitants in the incorporated eastern territories of Poland registered for the Deutsche Volksliste (officials in the General Government classified an another 50,000 people as "persons of German descent"). In Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg, just over 1.6 million residents received German citizenship, in addition to 300,000 in Bohemia-Moravia (excluding the Sudetenland), a minimum of 530,000 in Slovenia, and as many as 250,000 in Ukraine.[33] And all of that does not even include the roughly 50,000 children whom the Nazis kidnapped from countries under their control.[34] This means that, in one way or another, by choice or by force, an overall total of around 6.65 million foreign nationals became "Germans" during the Second World War, and though a great many of them already identified as

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[32] For Poland, see IPN Fond 167/6/1-44; Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik*, Table 15. For Slovenia, see NARA T-81/307/2435225-227: "Abschlussbericht der EWZ über die Erfassung der im Altreich untergebrachten Slowenenabsiedler," unsigned, October 3, 1943. The overall amount from Slovenia was actually a bit higher, since we know the SS sent several transports of WED candidates from Lower Styria after these statistics were compiled. For Western Europe, see Isabel Heinemann, '*Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut': Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 324fn, 328-329, 331-332. For foreign laborers screened inside the Reich, see USHMMA 15.021M/6/48/49-101; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 479-480, 487-488. If fewer people from this category entered the program, which is possible, the number is likely balanced out by the estimated several thousand inductees from groups 3 and 4 of the DVL, who are not included in the survey above. The total number of Soviet nationals who became WED candidates is unknown, though we can verify that 2,743 came from the Baltic and Bialystok, and it is likely that the program took in at least several hundred Ostarbeiter; see BA R 186/11: Harders, "Übersicht über das Arbeitsgebiet der Abteilung C 2 (Wiedereindeutschung)," September 25, 1942; BA R 59/70/1: Ellermeier to Haltermann, July 7, 1944.

[33] The SS tabulated a total of 788,964 Umsiedler as of January 1944, though it is clear that at least several hundred thousand more were brought in via the EWZ and the VoMi during the mass evacuations that took place afterwards; see the statistical charts in LOC/NMT, 940-941: Doc. NO-3568: "Brief Facts about Resettlement" (English transcript), January 1944. On the DVL, see Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik, 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), 134. On the General Government, see BA R 186/35: Greifelt to HSSPFs, May 26, 1944. Also see Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 79. For Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg, see LOC/NMT, 939: Doc. NO-3568: "Brief Facts about Resettlement" (English transcript), January 1944. On Bohemia-Moravia, see Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 245. On Slovenia, see Volkenborn, "Bericht über die politischen und rassischen Untersuchungen der Bevölkerung des Miesstales," May 4, 1941, in Tone Ferenc, "Quellen zur 'rassischen Untersuchungen von Slowenen unter der deutschen Okkupation," in Jochem and Seiderer, *Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Mord*, 145-151. Also see Steindl to Laforce, October 14, 1941, in *Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Entnationalisierungspolitik in Slowenien 1941-1945*, ed. Tone Ferenc (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1980), Doc. 154; Koch, "Bericht über die Ergebnisse der rassischen Bewertung der Bevölkerung in den besetzten Gebieten Kärntens und Krains," November 18, 1941, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 177; Obersteiner to Hildebrandt, August 23, 1943, in Ferenc, *Quellen*, Doc. 315. For Ukraine, see Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1986), 205-208.

[34] Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 508-509fn.

such before 1939 – we will never know for sure exactly how many – the vast majority almost certainly did not. Such an astronomical figure, exceeding even the number of Jews who perished in the Holocaust, demands that we rethink our conventional picture of the wartime Third Reich without overlooking or trivializing the untold suffering of the millions of human beings whose lives the Nazis either ruined or extinguished. Above all else, the story of the Re-Germanization Procedure reveals that genocide, population growth, economic mobilization, and geopolitical strategy functioned in a symbiotic relationship. Next to the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" and the mass impressment of foreign laborers (with which it overlapped), Germanization was the largest single policy field of demographic engineering the Nazis carried out during the Second World War – which in turn suggests that they were just as concerned with augmenting the German body politic via assimilation as they were with annihilating its real or imagined adversaries through extermination. It is this recognition that enables us to grasp the duality of arguably the darkest period in human history. Germanization bolstered the legitimacy of Nazi imperialism by affirming the presumed right of a superior society to dominate and "improve" lesser ones; paradoxically, this made genocidal violence against the latter all the more palatable.

Yet what is perhaps the most alarming feature of this whole strange saga is that the "hunt for good blood" did not fade into the past without first achieving a measure of success – an achievement that, while far from wholly reducible to violence, was ultimately predicated on it. To say that Nazism stimulated feelings of togetherness and devotion to the national collective among Germans is hardly novel; what is more difficult to stomach, however, is that it also had the capacity to elicit the same emotions among non-Germans, for they too were granted a place within the New Order and encouraged to assume that they belonged to the *Volksgemeinschaft* by so many Germans who likewise believed this to be true. In that respect, the Nazis took the message of domestic unity they had honed before the war and exported it to the lands they subjugated thereafter, where more than a few people were willing to buy into the notion of a revolutionary civilization that transcended social, political, and ethnic divisions in the name of racial communion. To be sure, most of the individuals who joined the Re-Germanization Procedure only did so because the SS put them in a position where acquiescence seemed like the only real option, and they can certainly be forgiven for making the best out of a bad situation. It is not only unfair but unrealistic to expect all of them to have risked a miserable fate so as to remain morally unblemished, even though some did just that. Yet for all of the undeniable hardships that WED candidates faced, they were not merely hapless pawns stuck beneath the gears of almighty historical forces, and there is not much descriptive or analytical value to be gained from portraying them unequivocally as heroic underdogs. Although victimized, they were not just victims, and many turned out to be quite adept at manipulating the tenets of Nazi ideology and the elective and performative nature of race to bend the circumstances of war and occupation to their advantage. While the coercive atmosphere in which re-

Germanization transpired often did alienate inductees from their peers and trigger resistance, it did not necessarily push them to cling ever more tenaciously to their distinctive cultural identities; actually, it seems to have engendered the opposite just as often (Robespierre was mistaken on that count). None of this is to say that re-Germanizables were necessarily complicit in the Nazi's far-reaching web of persecution, and it would be far too strong to denounce them as collaborators. But they were not exactly blameless or devoid of responsibility for their actions either. Even those among them who secretly despised National Socialism played an active role in legitimizing the crusade of racial consolidation by seeking and accepting the companionship of their German neighbors and overseers, who were equally responsible for driving the machine forward for the very same perfectly understandable and outwardly commendable reason – basic human decency. This was the grand paradox and enduring legacy of Nazi Germanization policy: that signs of amity and concord evinced between different ethnic groups in the most prosaic of everyday social exchanges on the home front convinced Himmler's minions that their fantastical cause was just, inspiring them to bring in more and more new initiates from the occupied territories, even those they perceived to be hostile "renegades," right up until the bitter end.

In some instances, the ties that bound these people together outlasted the Third Reich and grew deeper as the years went by – the closest thing to a happy ending that one could hope for. Although Zygmunt Rzazewski quickly reestablished contact with his relatives back in Poland when the war drew to a close, he evaded repatriation and elected to stay in the small town in Upper Austria where the SS had settled him. There he quickly rose to the status of a respected member of the community, married a local girl, and became a prosperous farmer. Zygmunt did not shy away from telling those of his friends and neighbors who were unaware how he had come to live in their midst, and they have never held it against him to this day.[35] Roman Sobkowiak shared a similar postwar biography. He and his girlfriend Elisabeth wed in 1947 and started a family that would eventually produce six children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Along with several other WED candidates who had spent most of the war in the resettlement camp Schelklingen, Roman's experience as a radio technician secured him a job at the AEG-Telefunken in Ulm, where he would work for over four decades. And once Herr Sobkowiak had at long last obtained German citizenship in December 1960, after years of bureaucratic red tape and rigmarole (not to mention a heavy dose of institutional prejudice), he could not help but reflect on the cosmic irony and utter folly of the spectacle to which he had been induced to submit: "The Nazis wanted to assimilate us forcibly, though I decided to become a German on my own accord." When all was said and done, Roman Sobkowiak was "finally Germanized."[36]

[35] Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*, 251-252.

[36] Roman Sobkowiak, *Eindeutschungsfähig?! Eine polnisch-deutsche Biografie im NS-Staat und in der jungen Bundesrepublik* (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschläger, 2009), 91, 96-101, 107.

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Vita

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