

The Escalation of German-Rumanian Anti-Jewish Policy after the Attack on the Soviet Union, June 22, 1941

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This paper deals with the deportation of Jews from Bukovina and Bessarabia and the massacre near Yampol Bridge¹. Focusing on these concrete historical events, it seeks to shed light on a key question: had a decision to annihilate Eastern European Jewry already been reached before the attack on the Soviet Union, or was the systematic mass murder a process of successive radicalization on the spot, a chain of evolving events that might falsely appear to the observer after the fact as the realization of some antecedent “grand design”? The first step in exploring this question is to look briefly into the relevant orders issued to the perpetrators of the mass murder (the Einsatzgruppen) of the Security Police (Sipo) and the SD - prior to their departure, and to identify the specific agencies that had a decisive role in the planning of the crime.

On March 13, 1941, Hitler issued the Guidelines for *Führer* Directive 21 Respective to Special Areas. These assigned the *Reichsführer*-SS Heinrich Himmler “special tasks” as part of the groundwork for political administration. In the French campaign, Himmler had been authorized only to put very small Sipo and SD detachments with observer status into the field. Moreover, these squads had been required to wear Wehrmacht uniforms of the Field Security Police (Geheime Feldpolizei, GFP)². Yet the March 13 directive guidelines spelled out a new assignment for Himmler in the “Operation of Barbarossa.”

¹ Some sections of this paper have been adapted from my dissertation “Die Einsatzgruppe D. Ein mobiles Kommando der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in der deutsch besetzten Sowjetunion,” currently in progress in Section (FB) I at the Technical University, Berlin. I am grateful to the Hamburg Institute for Social Research for their generous assistance in supporting this doctoral research.

² During the campaign in France, 25 Sipo members were deployed after the beginning of operations. See Helmut Krausnick, “Hitler und die Morde in Polen,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 11 (1963), p.201.

The *Reichsführer-SS* is hereby entrusted with special tasks in the name of the *Führer* for preparing political administration within the operational area of the army. These tasks derive from the struggle between two diametrically opposed political systems, a battle that must be waged to its final conclusion. Within the framework of these duties, the *Reichsführer-SS* is empowered to act autonomously and on his own responsibility. This does not impinge on the executive powers given to the Army Commander-in-Chief and the agencies under his supervision. The *Reichsführer-SS* will take steps to ensure that in carrying out his tasks, there is no detriment to military operations. Further details are to be handled by the Army Supreme Command (OKH) conferring directly with the *Reichsführer-SS* ³

This disclosure could no longer have come as a surprise to the Army Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, since he himself had been engaged in negotiations from early February 1941 with the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office) on the deployment in principle of Sipo units “after completing the occupation of enemy areas.” Already in these discussions, the activities were mentioned that would later be a mandatory part of the mission of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos (constituent detachments): “In particular, the tasks of this SS Sipo-Kommando consist in seizures, confiscations, and arrests of individuals for political reasons as well as other police measures.” ⁴

Matters had already progressed quite far, as is evident from the stenographic notes on talks held at the Army Group on March 6-7, 1941 between the head of the Central Department of the Office for Foreign Affairs/Counterintelligence in the Armed Forces Supreme Command (OKW), Colonel. Hans Oster, the head of Counterintelligence Dept. III in that same office, Lieutenant-Colonel von Bentivegni and the deputy counterintelligence (Ic) officer of the Army Group, Rittmeister Schach von Wittenau:

³ “Richtlinien auf Sondergebieten zur Weisung 21,” in Walter Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939-1945* (Koblenz: Bernard and Graefe, 1983), p.89.

⁴ Nuremberg Doc. NG-5225, “Sonderkommando AA, Prot.Kr.I/G. 178/41 g, Aufzeichnung, betr.: Einbau des Sonderkommandos AA in die SS,” February 4, 1941.

Deployment of Einsatzkommandos behind the most advanced section of the front lines. Orders to these directly from *Reichsführer-SS*. Major General Warlimont, Army Command, head Sect. Territorial Deployment in the Armed Forces Supreme Command, is presently authorized to execute the foll. orders from the *Führer*.

1. Liaison officers from the SS are to be assigned to the armies, of a rank not above that of the Ic, in order to ensure that the Ic officers are informed simultaneously of all orders from the Reichsf. SS to the Einsatzkommandos.
2. Delimited orders are to be issued to prevent disruptions of operations (subordination during troop movements, disruption of activity of civilian workers, etc.).
3. Executions are to be carried out whenever possible away from the immediate area of the troops. On principle, Einsatzkommandos are not subject to the military justice system but rather to SS jurisdiction.⁵

Thus, the question of the deployment of Kommando units of the Sipo and SD in principle was not the subject of negotiation in March 1941, since Heydrich and von Brauchitsch had already reached an understanding on this the month before. Instead, talks dealt with the “details,” because the Wehrmacht was not prepared to relinquish its controlling hand in the East and thus wished to be informed about all orders. Another noteworthy aspect here is that questions still in dispute were to be presented to Hitler directly for a decision.⁶ Consequently, the *spiritus rector* of the attack on the Soviet Union had a strong personal interest in a precise elaboration of his views on the conduct of the war in the East, which he did not entrust to blindly obedient command staffs.

⁵ Discussion, March 6-7, 1941, *Rittmeister* von Schach (Col. [General Staff] Oster, Head of Counterintelligence, Armed Forces Supreme Command, and Lieut.Col. [General Staff] v. Bentivegni, Head of Counterint. III). Military Archive, Potsdam (MAP), microfilm WF-03/9121, unpag. [fol. 121]; I would like to thank Christian Gerlach for calling my attention to this important document.

⁶ “Wishes of the Army Group [B, later Central, A.A.] 1. Clear demarcation of the authority of the Field Security Police and the SS. 2. Step up efforts to strengthen the FSP groups of the Army High Command and the Army Group in terms of men and materiel (esp. securing their mobility”); MAP, *ibid*.

In a two-and-a-half hour meeting with Himmler held on March 10, 1941, Heydrich reported to him on the state of negotiations between the army and the RSHA.⁷ Yet just as Heydrich informed Himmler regarding these negotiations, he likewise briefed the no. 2 man in the Nazi hierarchy, Hermann Goring on March 26, 1941. From the existing memo by Heydrich, it is clear that he functioned as the recipient of orders for Himmler, since he was informed that his agency was supposed to prepare a 3-4 page set of instructions for the troops. Those instructions were to impress upon the troops the “dangerous nature of the GPU, the political commissars, Jews, etc. ... so they would understand just who it was they had to stand up against the wall.”⁸ After matters had progressed to this point, a final discussion was held on April 16, 1941 in Graz between the Quartermaster-General Eduard Wagner and Himmler; Himmler's SS-Main Office chiefs Heydrich, Kurt Daluege, Karl Wolff and Hans Jüttner were also present.⁹ This meeting resulted in issuance of mandatory guidelines for administrative-technical integration of the Einsatzgruppen into the army retinue.¹⁰ An analogous set of guidelines were issued on May 21, 1941 for the formations of the Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSPF).¹¹

⁷ “Das Kalendarium Heinrich Himmlers mit Notizen der Jahre 1941/1942” Himmler's appointments calendar, entry, March 10, 1941, p. 522, Special Archive Moscow (Osobu), 1372-5-23; It must have been arranged relatively suddenly, since Himmler subsequently recorded the meeting with Heydrich in longhand in his appointments calendar, although other entries were typed.

⁸ Osobu, 500-3-795, p. 140-145, C.d.S.B. No. 3795/41, Berlin, March 26, 1941, memo. See also Götz Aly, “*Endlösung*”. *Völkerverschiebung und der ischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer 1995), pp. 270-*n*Mord an den europ 72.

⁹ Himmler's calendar, entry, April 16, 1941, p. 489, SAM, 1372-5-23; See also Andrej Angrick, Martina Voigt, et al., “Da hatte man schon ein Tagebuch führen müssen”, *Das Polizeibattillon 322 und die Judenmorde im Bereich der hrend des Sommers und Herbstes 1941,*” in Helge *n*Heeresgruppe Mitte w Grabitz, Klaus Bastlein, Johannes Tuchel, eds., *Die Normalität des Verbrechens* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1994), pp. 327-328.

¹⁰ Nuremberg Doc. NOKW-2080: “Oberkommando des Heeres, Az. Abt. Kriegsverwaltung, Nr.II/2101/41, geh. vom 28.4/1941, Betr.: Regelung des Einsatzes der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in Verbänden des Heeres.”

¹¹ Nuremberg Doc. NOKW-2079: “Der Reichsführer SS, Tgb. Nr. 114/41 g.Kdos. vom 21.5.1941, Betr.: Sonderauftrag des Führers,” reproduced in

After the setting up of the Einsatzgruppen had been given its blessing from above, the RSHA began in April 1941 to assemble the necessary personnel in the small town of Pretzsch an der Elbe. Before their departure, they had not given a (or the) comprehensive “order for the Final Solution,” as is still sometimes assumed in the literature.¹² Rather, the activities of the Einsatzgruppen were to be consonant with the specific mission and tasks in Poland in 1939. Concretely, that meant the seizure of all relevant secret archives and documents, special searches for prominent Soviet functionaries, émigré opponents of the Nazi regime, and potential collaborators. The list for liquidation was embracive: it included professional Communist politicians (Comintern functionaries), higher, middle-level, and the more radical lower-level functionaries active in the Party, Central Committee, district and area committees; people's commissars; Jews occupying positions in the Party structure and the state administration (in the case of the Party, mere membership may have been reason enough) and other “radicals.” Each of the three German army groups leading the attack was assigned an Einsatzgruppe designated A, B or C.

Shortly before the attack, the head of Amt III (SD) in the RSHA, Otto Ohlendorf, was tapped to take over a fourth Einsatzgruppe that had been set up ad hoc; its assignment was to penetrate into the Caucasus from the territory of allied Rumania, following behind the 11th Army. Ohlendorf's

Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, “Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener,” in Hans Buchheim et al., *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, vol. 2 (Munich: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag 1984)p. 184-85.

Appeared in English as: *Anatomy of the SS State* (London: Collins, 1968).

The HSSPF (*Hoehere SS und Polizeiführer*) was the personal, district-level representative of Himmler, and commanding officer of the SS and various police formations behind the front lines.

¹² Among the most recent examples, see Joerg Friedrich, *Das Gesetz des Krieges* (München: Piper, 1993), pp. 623-624, and, with some qualifications, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitlers willige Vollstrecker* (Berlin: Siedler, 1996), pp. 184-190. The original English edition of Goldhagen's book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), is reviewed in this volume by Goetz Aly and Raul Hilberg [ed.]. On the other hand, Ralf Ogorreck's deeper and more comprehensive examination of this question, demonstrates that there could not have been a general murder order before the invasion of the USSR. See Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen und die “Genesis der Endloesung”* (Berlin: Metropol, 1996).

Einsatzgruppe D (EG-D) was composed of five Einsatzkommandos: Sk (Sonderkommando) 10a, Sk 10b, Ek 11a, Ek 11b and Ek 12, and comprised some 600 men. On July 4, 1941, and thus nearly two weeks after the beginning of operations, EG-D reached Pietra Neamt in Rumania, establishing contact there with the 11th Army under General. Ritter von Schobert.¹³

Yet it was not EG-D, as might perhaps be assumed, that initiated anti-Jewish measures in the area and the first wave of killings. Before Ohlendorf's unit had reached the front lines, the Rumanian secret service (Serviciul Special de Informatuini) and the Bucarest branch of the Foreign Affairs Office/Counterintelligence of the OKW, headed by Ritter von Stranksy (affectionately called "Sandu" or "Sandule" by the Rumanians), had launched a pogrom against the large Jewish population in Iasi (Jassy) near the Pruth River beginning the night of June 28.¹⁴ In the course of "quelling" a purported "Jewish uprising," German and Rumanian army units and local police, acting on orders, had slaughtered between 2,500 and 5,000 (probably close to 4,000) Jewish residents in the city.

Yet that bloodbath marked only the beginning, since Iasi was subsequently emptied of Jews in the aftermath of the pogrom. Several thousand persons were shunted aimlessly through the region in (later so-called) death trains; packed in cattle cars and suffering from a critical lack of food and water in the extreme summer heat, many perished in misery or were driven to insanity. Sometimes, when the trains were "emptied," the survivors were shot out in the open field by Rumanian troops.¹⁵

¹³ Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981), pp. 195-197.

¹⁴ "Fernschreiben Gen. KdO XXX A.K.," June 30, 1941, "Armeeoberkommando 11, Abt. Ia, Tagesmeldung des XXX A.K., 01", MAP, microfilm WF-03/29607, fr. 5656 and fr. 5697; "Armeeoberkommando 11, Abt. Ia vom 29.6.41 an Heeresgruppe Süd und nachr. A.O.K. 17": "Shooting reported in Iasi since 11 p.m., June 28, presumably by Communists and Jews," MAP, microfilm WF-03/10420, fr. 851.

¹⁵ 22 Js 205/61 der Staatsanwaltschaft München [Munich State Prosecutor's Office] I, vol. 15, testimony by Helmut R., former member of *Korück* (Kommandeur des Rückwartigen Armeegebiets; Commander of the Rear Army Area), 553, pp. 3569-70.

The general staff of the 11th Army took stock of these events on July 8, and the massacre was reported to a prominent visitor, Admiral Wilhelm Franz Canaris, head of the intelligence department of the Armed Forces Supreme Command. Thus, the initial spark for Jewish persecution and mass murder had not come from Einsatzgruppe D, but from the Rumanian and German military authorities.

After the Pruth had been crossed and units were on territory that had been annexed by the Soviet Union for more than a year - and, in Rumanian eyes, had now been justifiably reconquered - the Einsatzgruppe became active. Together with Rumanian military units, it took part in the murder on July 8-9 of 600 persons in Czernowitz (Cernauti), the main city in Bukovina, including the most prominent citizens in the large Jewish community of some 50,000. A particular target group for the Rumanians were those Jews who could not prove that they had been resident in Czernowitz before June 28, 1940 - the day the region had been evacuated and surrendered to the Red Army. The Rumanians regarded them as newcomers on the coattails of the hated Soviet forces, and thus singled them out for persecution.

There were similar outrages in Bessarabia. In Kishinev, the capital of the region, Einsatzgruppe D had set up a ghetto and concentration camp at the end of July 1941 after consultations with the Rumanian local commandant. Prior to that, Ek 11a had executed 151 Jewish men accused of "sabotage." Around August 1, 1941, EG-D probably received an order to expand the categories of victims stipulated by Heydrich, especially since at the same time 200 Jewish women were murdered by Ek 11a in Kishinev. Several days later, small Jewish children in Tighina were also among the victims; in this action, the Ek 11a commander personally shot a girl about two years old, reportedly remarking: "You must die so we can live."¹⁶

Though there may have been a directive at this time expanding the original basic instructions to the Einsatzgruppen, the antisemitic actions elsewhere

¹⁶ Ibid, vol. 5, testimony, Johannes Schlupper, p. 1011 and Johannes Nenntwig, p. 1078; vol. 8, testimony, Johann F., p. 1742; vols. 13-14, testimony, Johannes Schlupper, pp. 2691 and 2865R; vol. 19, testimony, August R., p. 3833; vol. 20, testimony, Gotthard K., p. 4192 and Rudolf V., p. 4208; see also the indictment against Johannes Schlupper et al., *ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 27-29.

appear rather to have sprung from the Rumanianization policies of the Rumanian leader Antonescu. After the Czernowitz slaughter, those policies were initially aimed at separatist initiatives by the Ukranians, and, in a further step, against the Jewish population in the region. These initiatives by the Rumanian government, which had not been anticipated by Berlin or the 11th Army, constitute the primary focus of this paper and will now be examined in greater detail.

Around July 30, Ohlendorf learned to his consternation that his units could not be freely deployed in the way he wanted, since the Chief of Staff of the 11th Army, General Otto Woehler, refused to issue the necessary authorization for such action. Indeed, quite the opposite was true: ignoring the agreements reached between the SS and the Army Supreme Command, Woehler was trying to utilize Einsatzgruppe D for his own purposes, since he was plagued by certain problems that he hoped to solve with the help of Ohlendorf's men. Though the Chief of Staff may have foreseen that it would prove difficult to combat partisans and gather in the harvest during military operations, it probably came as a total surprise to him (and the entire general staff) when the Rumanians deported thousands of Jews across the Dniester behind the 11th Army (to Yampol and Soroki). The Rumanians had not informed the German General Staff prior to the action. Woehler believed security in the rear area was now jeopardized, since he had no units at his own disposal to force the deportees back west. He feared the prospect of "similar measures ... at other crossing points as well" - i.e. further expulsions - due to the "independence of Rumanian military and civilian authorities in this region." Woehler could think of no other measure but to order Einsatzgruppe D to "prevent this intention from being realized, using all necessary means."¹⁷ The only subsequent advantage of this order for Ohlendorf was that he was simultaneously permitted to deploy Ek 12 under Gustav Nosske along with the other Kommandos east of the Dniester, and to relocate the EG staff to a more forward position.

¹⁷ "Armeeoberkommando 11, Abt. Ic/A.O. Nr. 547/41 geh., A.H.Qu.," July 29, 1941; "Armeeoberkommando 11, Abt. Ic/A.O vom 29.7.1941, An Einsatzgruppe D," MAF (Military Archives, Freiburg), RH 20-11/488, p. 11-13.

Yet what had actually transpired in the rear area of the 11th Army? What had caused the sudden appearance of mass columns of Jewish refugees that supposedly constituted a threat to the “security of lines of communications” of the 11th Army, and thus forced Woehler to take action? The answer is closely linked with the “Ukrainian question” that bedeviled the Rumanians.

The probability of an armed confrontation between Ukrainian militias and Rumanian regular troops in Bukovina had come to an abrupt end in late July after the Germans refused to grant the Ukrainians a state of their own (which, in Ukrainian eyes, should also include parts of Bukovina), and it had been decided that Eastern Galicia would be incorporated into the Generalgouvernement.¹⁸ Thus, at the end of July 1941, the initiative in Bukovina was now completely in Rumanian hands. In diplomatic notes, they assured the German authorities that the Ukrainians would not be subjected to reprisals; yet a different picture emerged on the ground, especially in the villages:

Large numbers of Ukrainians have been arrested. They are held in custody without interrogation, and generally are released after some time with the remark it had been a case of “mistaken identity.” Ukrainian nationalists are being singled out in particular for arrest. But even Ukrainians not politically active are also treated as fair game, this solely on the basis of their ethnic origin.¹⁹

Rumanian gendarmes plundered the villagers and murdered Ukrainian functionaries, such as the regional leader of the OUN, Zwisda in return for bribe. In some villages, armed skirmishes broke out between Rumanian rural police units and Ukrainian farmers who had fled into the forests. In this situation, the Germans authorized the “active segment of the Ukrainian nationalists, who wished to take part in the fight against the Bolsheviks,” to

¹⁸ EM 38, July 30, 1941 and EM 42, August 3, 1941. See also: Lecture notes, Legation Sec. Grosskopf, August 6, 1941, BAK (Federal Archives, Koblenz), R 58/215, reproduced in ADAP (*Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik, 1918-1945*, (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970) , Series D, vol. XIII/1, pp. 240-241.

¹⁹ EM 42, August 3, 1941, report of Einsatzgruppe D, BAK, R 58/215

enter Galicia.²⁰ The well-armed Ukrainian militias then fled to Eastern Galicia,²¹ where they joined the underground (either the Bandera movement or the OUN) or the German-controlled constabularies. The 11th Army High Command encouraged local commanders to set up Ukrainian relief committees, but at the same time outlawed any party-political formations and forbade all political activity that might represent the Ukrainians vis-à-vis the Rumanians.²²

After the departure of the militias, the remaining Ukrainians were subjected to an even more brutal regime of terror by the advancing Rumanian troops: at gun-point, they pilfered anything they could lay their hands on, from jewelry, money and clothing to cows and sheep. They also raped women and girls. Meanwhile, the Rumanian military police took no action to prevent these ravages, since they were themselves among the perpetrators.

The Rumanian propaganda companies spread word in the villages that the region east of the Dniester now belonged to Rumania, and that they had the right to ban use of the Ukrainian language. The practice of the Ukrainian Orthodox religion was also restricted, and they forcibly baptized Ukrainian children into the Rumanian Orthodox Church. Panic spread among the Ukrainians, and finally took on such proportions that the Germans felt constrained to deploy German units to protect the Ukrainians against the Rumanians.²³ The Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army, General von

²⁰ Ibid., OUN = Orhanizacija Ukrainskych Nacionalistiv (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists). After its leader Jevgen Konowalec was murdered in Rotterdam in 1938, the OUN split into two groups: the supporters of Stephan Bandera (OUN-B or OUN-R, i.e. revolutionaries) and the supporters of Konowalec's former deputy, Andrej Melnik. The latter continued to call themselves OUN or OUN-M.

²¹ Hugo Gold, *Geschichte der Juden der Bukowina*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1958 and 1962), here vol. 2, 56.

²² "Richtlinien für militärische Hoheitsrechte, Sicherung und Verwaltung in den neueroberten Gebieten ostwärts des Dnjestr, Anlage zu A.O.K. 11 O/Qu./Qu.2/Br.B.Nr. 472/41 geh.," August 3, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-05728300, fr. 157-166

²³ "Organisation Roland vom 12.8.1941, An Gen.Kdo. LIV.AK, Abt. Ic, Tagesmeldung Nr. 7 für den 11.8.1941"; p. 1025: "Organisation Roland vom 10.8.1941, An Gen.Kdo. LIV.AK, Abt. Ic, Tagesmeldung Nr. 5 für den

Schobert, wrote directly to Marshal Ion Antonescu on August 15, 1941 regarding the intolerable conditions that now constituted a massive obstacle for good relations between the 11th Army High Command and the Rumanian army:

These sorts of actions [plundering and rape by Rumanian soldiers, A.A.] can serve to foment opposition against the liberator among the Ukrainian population, which had expected to be freed from the Bolshevik yoke by the German and Rumanian troops. In the interest of a victorious end to the campaign and the furtherance of political pacification and economic stability in the occupied territories, we must prevent the Ukrainian people from feeling deceived in the trust they have placed in the Rumanian and German soldier.²⁴ Despite von Schobert's appeal to Antonescu, the Rumanian military command had no interest in a genuine pacification in the region. The German military considered, as a precaution, and to avoid any dependency on the Rumanians, dispatching German troops to guard the Dniester bridges that were crucial to German military supply lines to the front. But due to a lack of personnel and the fact that the Rumanians were indeed allies, the suggestion was rejected.²⁵ As would become clear later on, that was an error on the part of the Germans. Finally, in northern Bukovina, Einsatzgruppe C, likewise skeptical, had taken over protection of the Ukrainian population in Czernowitz as a safety measure (in place of EG-D, which had moved on further east).²⁶

9.8.1941.", MAP, microfilm 56748 [microfilm of the Bundesarchiv Potsdam (BAM) that was stored in MAP due to its military contents], fr. 1013.

²⁴ "Der Oberbefehlshaber der 11. Armee vom 15.8.1941, Euer Exzellenz!., MAP, microfilm WF-03/29653, fr. 921-22.

²⁵ "Fernschreiben der Passierscheinstelle OST VII vom 3.8.1941 aufgrund der Anordnung der Oberkdo. Herr. Gen. Qu. Abt. KR Verw. Nr.II/4788/41 geh. vom 2.8.41 betr. Absperrung der Dnjestrlinie ", MAP, microfilm WF-03/29642, pp. 255-56; "Richtlinien, " op.cit. [see note 22], MAP, microfilm WF-05728300, fr. 165-66. On the logistic importance of the bridges especially. at Mogilev-Podolsk, see: "Vortrag vor Oberbefehlshaber, zugegen Chef und Ia, später Verbindungsoffizier OKH," June 28, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-03/10420, fr. 914.

²⁶ EM 47, August 9, 1941, BAK, R 58/215.

It would quickly become evident that the German mistrust of the Rumanian units was justified. In the framework of their policy of autarky that did not countenance any foreign ethnic group, the Rumanians wished to kill two birds with one stone: while finding a solution to the “Ukrainian question,” they also sought to resolve certain elements of their “Jewish problem” by expelling indigent Jews, and those who had been swept into the Rumanian-controlled territory during the hostilities, eastward over the Dniester into Transnistria.²⁷

Long columns of refugees, coming from Bessarabia or other parts of Rumania, surged eastward across the Dniester in the direction of Zhitomir, trudging on foot or occasionally in horse-drawn carts, guarded by Rumanian troops and officers.²⁸ Some of the deportees had been harried for weeks by Rumanian units from one locality to the next; now the Rumanians believed the time had come to be rid of them. A column with some 5,000-6,000 Jews passed over the bridge near Yampol on July 29, 1941. The German bridge guards let them pass, since it was under the supervision of Rumanian officers and the Germans had not been given orders to deny transit to such columns. Shortly thereafter, the Jews were “let free”; the starving masses “inundated” the town, searching desperately for something to eat. “Due to plundering and the likely danger of epidemics, the Jews were gathered together and housed in one neighborhood in Yampol.”²⁹

This incident so alarmed the 11th Army’s general staff that Woehler (in his above mentioned order of July 29) instructed EG-D, operating in conjunction with the military police, to drive the Jewish expellees westward back over the

²⁷ Yet east of the Dniester, the Jewish refugees were of possible use to the Rumanians, since there were radical Ukrainian antisemites living in that area who, as Ek 10a reported, had preserved their “racial pride.” See: EM 42, August 5, 1941, BAK, R 58/215. Was the possible motive for the expulsions the hope that the Ukrainians and Jews there would fight tooth and nail for food and clothing, and ultimately kill one another for these necessities, while the Rumanians could only stand to benefit from such clashes?

²⁸ After questioning by the military police, it became clear that there were also many Galician Jews from Tarnopol among the expellees. See “Stabsoffizier d. Feldgendarmarie vom 1.8.1941 1. An Oberquartiermeister, 2. An Ic durch Oberquartiermeister, Betr.: Abschiebung der rum. Juden in deutsches Interessengebiet bei Jampol”, MAF, RH 20-11/391, unpag.
²⁹ Ibid.

border again into Rumanian territory, and to prevent any further expulsions by the Rumanians, anticipated at other river crossing points.³⁰

On July 30, 1941, Major Klemm, the local commander in Yampol, radioed for support. He had managed to gather together the Jewish refugees in Yampol, provide them with some food, arrange them in columns and march them back over the Dniester into the town of Soroki in Rumanian territory. However, since “there was no one from the Rumanian side” west of the river “to take control of the Jews, the only option would be to let them run off.”³¹

Yet that had to be prevented at all costs; thus, the harried masses of Jews piled up at the eastern bank of the Dniester until further Rumanian or German guard units had arrived.

Already during the trek to Soroki, some children had died of exhaustion, the elderly who could still manage to walk leaned on one another, weaker Jews had sunk into the mud, where they lay lifeless. In their agony, some Jews “repeatedly beseeched our officers to go ahead and get it over with, shooting them, since they were all being slowly tormented to death anyhow.”³²

Near Soroki, the German guard detachment handed the Jews over to a Rumanian reinforcement column that happened to be passing by, and to the guard units stationed there. Those who refused to return or attempted to flee while being escorted back were shot by German military police. That day the bridge guards could see bodies floating down the river.³³ The following night, the Rumanians tried once more “to push 600-700 persons over the bridge back into German-controlled territory.” German military police and members of the bridge guard detachment stepped in to prevent this. In Soroki, the Jews sat in torpor on the sidewalks, women were raped in a nearby grain field, others gave birth to their babies “out in the open fields and remained lying

³⁰ “Armeekommando 11, Abt.Ic/A.O. Nr. 547/41 geh., A.H.Qu.,” July 29, 1941, MAF, RH 20-11/488, pp. 11-12.

³¹ “Abt.Ic/AO, A.H.Qu.,” July 30, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-03/29637, fr. 328
³² MAF, RH 20-11/391 (see note 28).

³³ SA München (State Archives, Munich), , Staatsanwaltschaft 21768 [identical with 112 JS 3/62, Staatsanwaltschaft München I], vol. 2, testimony, Paul M., pp. 728R-729.

there neglected.”³⁴ A large number of these Jews were then shunted off by the Rumanians in a westerly direction, destination unknown.

On July 31, 1941, von Schobert informed the Rumanian general staff that the “movement of large masses of Jews in the army rear areas can pose a serious threat to troop supply and is thus intolerable.” He told the Rumanians categorically that any further “deportation of Jews or Russians eastward over the Dniester” would be prevented by German troops.³⁵ General von Schobert also sent copies of this ultimatum to the Supreme Command general staff, the Army Group South, the German Legation and the German military advisory mission (the so-called Deutsche Heeresmission, DHM) in Rumania, and the subordinate combat and economic units, so that pressure might be exerted on the Rumanians from all sides. The EG-D also was sent a copy of this letter; Ohlendorf knew what was expected of him.

In the meantime, Major von Erleben, chief of the military police, had arrived in Yampol to get a first-hand picture of the situation. He determined that “order in Yampol” had been restored and that the “local Jews” were likewise under control as a result of “stringent measures.” He and Major Klemm were only astonished about certain reports that had come to Klemm's attention: he was told that the premeditated expulsion by the Rumanians had been carefully prepared in advance. Moreover, German-speaking Jews claimed that everything had supposedly been done “at the order of the German High Command in Rumania.” That may have seemed strange to his ears at the time, but the incident in Yampol was now resolved for Major von Erleben, and he decided there was no need for heightened security measures.³⁶ However, he was thoroughly mistaken in that assessment.

Despite von Schobert's threat, the Rumanians cold-bloodedly stepped up their deportation policies from August 1941 on: the number of deported Jews on the banks of the Dniester continued to mount - rather than diminish in accordance with German wishes. This time the Rumanians attempted to expel Jews at points further up the Dniester, in direct proximity to the Hungarian-

³⁴ MAF, RH 20-11/391 (see note 28).

³⁵ “Armeeoberkommando 11, Abt. Ic/A.O. vom 31.7.1941, An Rum. Gen. Stab.”, MAP, microfilm WF-03/10424, fr. 548

³⁶ MAF, RH 20-11/391 (see note 28).

occupied section of the Ukraine near Kamenets-Podolsk in the northeast and German-controlled territory near Mogilev-Podolsk. Thousands of Jews - the reports of Einsatzgruppe D assumed a figure in excess of 27,000³⁷ - were driven from Bessarabia and Bukovina across the bridges of Mogilev-Podolsk into German-occupied land. In some cases, Rumanian army engineers constructed special pontoon bridges, which were immediately dismantled after driving the Jews across the river.³⁸ SK 10b was called in and managed to catch up with several columns, but was unable to prevent the crossing.³⁹ Further south in the vicinity of Kishinev, the Rumanians were also successful: they had managed to expel all undesirables - in this instance, probably in the main Ukrainians and Russians - eastward across the bridge at Karantin. Here too, the expellees, waiting on the eastern bank on the Dniester, implored the German 54th Army Corps to return them to Bessarabia. The 54th Corps felt this was a task that exceeded its capacities, and the Chief of General Staff requested assistance from Kommando 11a stationed in Kishinev under the command of Paul Zap.⁴⁰

In the tug of war with the 11th Army High Command, the Rumanians had once again seized the initiative in the question of whether Rumania should first be “cleansed” of all foreigners or German military reinforcements be allowed to reach the front unhindered. Now it was the Germans' turn to act. The situation for Ek 11a was relatively simple, since the bridge at Karantin was controlled by the Germans. Deploying Zapp's men, the “makeshift inspections” were replaced by “methodical checks”; in this way, they were able to channel the stream of refugees back into Bessarabia.⁴¹ This was in stark contrast with the situation in Mogilev-Podolsk, since the 11th Army High Command was unable

³⁷ EM 67, August 29, 1941, BAK, R 58/216

³⁸ 22 Js 203/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, vol. 10, testimony, Wilhelm K., p. 2412.

³⁹ Ibid., vol. 7, testimony, Felix Rühl, p. 1398.

⁴⁰ MAP, microfilm 56748 [microfilm of the BA-Potsdam that was stored in MAP due to its military contents], fr. 954: “Generalkommando LIV.A.K., Abt.Ic/A.O. vom 2.8.41, An den Führer des Sonderkommandos XIa Herrn SS-Sturmbannführer Zapp.”

⁴¹ Ibid.

to spare a single man to “guard the Dniester line outside the crossing points”; indeed, even in regard to Wehrmacht traffic, they were only able to exercise limited supervision.⁴²

Antonescu responded on August 16 to the strongly worded communication of von Schobert sent the day before, in which von Schobert had complained to the Rumanian leader about the policy of deportation and occupation being pursued by the Rumanian troops. Antonescu did not contribute to deescalation, as von Schobert at least had hoped he might; rather, the Conducator opted for a course leading to a head-on confrontation with the 11th Army. He peremptorily ignored General von Schobert and his military superiors, turning directly to the German envoy in Bucharest Manfred von Killinger. The Rumanian leader complained to the ambassador that German army units near Soroki were shipping Bessarabian Jews - who, according to Antonescu's “interpretation,” had been taken along by retreating Soviet troops - from the Ukraine back into Bessarabia.⁴³

He then disclosed to von Killinger the basis of his authority for demanding a halt to any further returns of large columns of exhausted Jewish deportees. Antonescu claimed that Hitler himself had spelled out to him the guidelines for “treatment of the Eastern Jews” during his visit to Munich in mid-June 1941, and that Rumania was now carrying them out! He argued that the policies of

⁴² “Fernschreiben der Passierscheinstelle OST VII vom 3.8.1941,” (see note 25). It is also evident from the document that the problem of guarding the Dniester line was broached in a discussion between the High Command 11th Army and the Army Command-in-Chief Field Marshal von. Brauchitsch, who was on a visit to the 11th Army on July 29, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-03/29642, fr. 255-56.

⁴³ “Der Gesandte in Bukarest an das Auswärtige Amt,” August 16, 1941, reproduced in ADAP, Series D, vol. XIII/1, p. 264. See also Ohlendorf's testimony on this before his trial. Under interrogation, he stressed that initially, the only question was to find a solution to the problem of the Eastern Jews, i.e. the Jews in the Soviet sphere of influence - not the destruction of all Jews in Europe. See Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich (IFZ), ZS 278, vol. II, interrogation, Otto Ohlendorf, December 4, 1946. Accordingly, it would appear that Antonescu was certainly well-informed, since this is precisely what he attempted to carry out, while leaving the Jews in the kingdom largely unmolested. In my view, the later frictions between the RSHA and Rumania were due to the fact that Berlin was trying to create a new comprehensive solution, while Bucarest did not wish to venture beyond the previous guidelines and wanted to remain independent in its decisions.

the German military were in clear contradiction to Hitler's statements in Munich; consequently, the German authorities should be instructed immediately "to deport the Jews in some other direction."⁴⁴ In his report to the Foreign Ministry, von Killinger could only add that the return of the Jews to Bessarabia did indeed "constitute an undesirable burden for Rumania," and left the decision up to his superiors in Berlin.

Maybe von Erleben and Klemm in Yampol might now have understood what lay behind the claim of Jews there that they had been expelled on orders from the Germans, since Antonescu apparently believed his actions were completely justified on the basis of what Hitler had purportedly told him. In the Foreign Office, Walter Hewel, Franz Rademacher and Karl Ritter combed through the official minutes of the discussions between Hitler and Antonescu. They could find no written records to support Antonescu's assertion; but Ritter reported to the Armed Forces Supreme Command that since "the *Führer* also spoke with the General on other occasions in Munich, it is quite possible that they also went into the question of the Eastern Jews at that time."⁴⁵ He went on to conclude:

In any event, there is no reason to doubt the truth of General Antonescu's assertion. So I would recommend that his wishes be taken into consideration; the relevant German military authorities should be instructed not to send the Bessarabian Jews back.⁴⁶

At the same time, several junior officers in Sk 10b were pondering what to do with the Jews camped on the eastern bank of the Dniester. One of them, SS-

⁴⁴ "Der Gesandte in Bukarest...", Ibid.

⁴⁵ Letter from Ritter to the Armed Forces Supreme Command, August 27, 1941, partially reproduced in fn. 1 to Doc. 207, ADAP, Series D, vol. XIII/1, p. 264.

⁴⁶ Ibid. In a communication dated August 19, 1941 to the Quartermaster-General Wagner in the Army Supreme Command, Eugen Ritter von Schobert had complained once again about the Jewish policy of the Rumanians. But this complaint apparently had no effect, since there would shortly be "solutions" of a different kind, as would soon be evident from Kamenets-Podolsk. See: "Armeeoberkommando 11 Abt.Ic/AO, On Oberkommando des Heeres, Generalquartiermeister," August 19, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-03/29657, fr. 584/85

Lieutenant Wiesenberger - who was in charge of a village located some 50 km up the Dniester from Mogilev-Podolsk and packed with deportees - recommended they should all be shot. Other officers objected, arguing they did not have enough men there to do the job, especially since the Sonderkommando had been dispersed in very small detachments along the eastern bank of the river.⁴⁷ One of these sub-detachments, under Siegfried Schuchard, had even pushed on ahead to Kamenets-Podolsk, although this town was part of the deployment area of EG-C, not EG-D.

One very curious fact is that at this same time, SS-Captain Ziehe from SK 10b was dispatched on short notice to Berlin, Bucharest and Budapest, though the reason for his journey remains unknown. Was the confusion so great in the Einsatzgruppe and its constituent Kommandos about what further action should be taken, and were the spheres of authority and agreements between Germany and Rumania so unclear, that it appeared imperative to come up with a binding clarification? In any event, Ziehe's itinerary to these three capitals traces a constellation significant for the expulsion of the Jews across the Dniester, since in August 1941, the Hungarians had also started to expel "foreign," i.e. émigré Jews. Via the KEOKH (Külfoeldieket Ellenorzoe Oorszagos Koezponti Hatosag), the Hungarian supervisory agency for foreigners living in Hungary, a thousand persons a day were being brought to the assembly point in Koeroesmezo, and then deported from there to Kamenets-Podolsk in militarily administered territory in the Ukraine. On August 10, there were already some 14,000 Jews in Kamenets-Podolsk.⁴⁸

While the Hungarians were just beginning with their expulsion policy, the Rumanians had already been doggedly pursuing a similar line (with partial success), and there had been speculations in Berlin about creating a so-called

⁴⁷ 22 Js 203/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, vol. 10, testimony, Wilhelm K., fol. 2412.

⁴⁸ Randolph L. Braham, "The Kamenets Podolsk and Delvidek Massacres: Prelude to the Holocaust in Hungary," *Yad Vashem Studies* IX (1973): pp.133-56.

On Hungarian deportation policy, see also: EM 66, August 28, 1941: "Men of the 10th Hungarian Rifle Battalion expelled thousands of Hungarian Jews across the Dniester to Galicia. They were promptly sent back by the E-troops in Tarnopol.," BAK, R 58/216.

reservation for Jews in the vicinity of the Pripet marches (i.e. north of the expulsion area utilized by the Rumanians and Hungarians, though still partially within the region of the Army Group South)⁴⁹. A decision had now also been reached about the “future treatment” of the Jews amassed in Mogilev-Podolsk. In a conference at EG-D headquarters between Ohlendorf and the head of Kommando 10b Alois Persterer, and his staff officer Felix Rühl, Ohlendorf decided to push all the Jews in Mogilev-Podolsk back into Rumanian-controlled areas.

Rühl returned to Mogilev-Podolsk and instructed the other Kommando members. The detachment leader Lipps “summoned the Jewish *Altestenrat* and informed them about this order.”⁵⁰ An attempt was made to spirit the Jews under cover of darkness over the bridge. But the Rumanian bridge guards were on the alert and prevented the crossing. The Rumanians warned that in the event of another attempt, they would open fire on the Jewish columns and on the German guards accompanying them. Lipps and Rühl were stymied. Since they had no authority for a decision of their own, Rühl went back again to consult with the group staff in Olshanka. He learned there that German engineers had constructed a pontoon bridge down the river at Yampol in the deployment area of Ek 12. Ohlendorf conferred with Nosske, head of EK 12, and decided that the Jews in Mogilev-Podolsk should be brought to Yampol and then be pushed there across the Dniester.⁵¹ Preparations were made for the long and arduous trek to Yampol. The following events cannot

⁴⁹ EM 52, August 14, 1941: “Moreover, until a final solution is found to the Jewish Question for the entire continent, this problem [the non-systematic persecution of Jews by the Rumanians and the relation between Rumanians and Ukrainians, A.A.] can only be properly dealt with in a German-Ukrainian framework. The excess Jewish masses can be utilized and used up in an excellent way by deploying them for cultivating the large Pripet marshes, and the marshes along the northern Dnieper and the Volga.”, BAK, R 58/216

⁵⁰ 22 Js 203/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, vol. 7, testimony, Felix Rühl, p. 1399.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1399-1400.

be dated precisely, but probably took place around August 20, 1941.⁵² Yet on the basis of numerous statements given to state prosecutors in the Federal Republic of Germany by those involved, it is possible to reconstruct the course of events in some detail. Since the Sk 10b command wanted to expedite its orders, it decided to execute all Jews who might slow down a rapid march to Yampol. Two hundred “old and sick” were selected out of a Jewish column, taken away and shot in a hollow.⁵³ Those Jews under Wiesenberg’s control also had to set out on the trek. Beforehand, “15 elderly Jews no longer able to walk” were taken out by local farmers in a horse-drawn cart to a hill behind the village and shot there by Wiesenger and other Kommando members.⁵⁴ A young man had been able to persuade Wiesenger to exempt his father from the execution by promising to carry the old man the entire way on his back. The column then set off on foot going south - at its tail, the young man bearing his father on his back, struggling to keep the old man alive.⁵⁵

Members of Ek 12, commanded by Nosske, hurried toward the marching columns of deportees (who had to cover about 30 km) in order to relieve the men of SK 10b guarding the Jews. Nosske, together with Wilhelm Grünwald, one of his unit commanders, then sought out the bridge commander at Yampol to clarify how the crossing was to be organized. It turned out that the commander was a former fellow student of Nosske’s from his home town of Halle, and you don’t refuse an old friend a favor.⁵⁶ Due to the constant stream of supply trucks and reinforcements pouring over the bridge, the bridge commander Erwin Harsch could not clear his bridge for a crossing, but he knew an additional bridge would soon be completed a few kilometers downstream. Harsch contacted the bridge construction unit of the

⁵² 119 c Js 1/69, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, Indictment against Max Drexel and Walter Kehr, fol. 29. According to this, the crucial day in question was August 19.

⁵³ 22 Js 203/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, vol. 4, testimony, Kurt K., p. 937.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Testimony, Wilhelm K., vol. 10, pp. 2412-13.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, testimony, Heribert Sch., vol. 9, p. 2087.

⁵⁶ 22 Js 206/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, Testimony, Gustav Nosske, vol. 4, p. 1015.

Organisation Todt (the semimilitary construction agency for highways and military installations; O.T.) and inquired whether they would be able for a short time to “accommodate front-bound traffic on their bridge.” The O.T. agreed; in return, it was given a consignment of nails in order to cover at least half of the bridge with a “reinforced layer” for heavy vehicles. An agreement was reached that Wehrmacht supplies would pass over the O.T. bridge for the period of one day beginning at 8 p.m. Now the only question yet to be decided was the time: when were the Rumanians to be tricked and the exhausted Jews brought across the Dniester?⁵⁷

In order to fool the Rumanians, Nosske decided to drive the Jews across the river around midnight. It was already dusk when a courier and some additional men dispatched by Ohlendorf reached Yampol along with the weary Jewish columns. He informed Nosske that Ohlendorf had ordered “slow-moving persons who could not be expected to keep up with the rest in a single column” back to Rumania “to be shot.” After nightfall, some 300-400 Jews were taken aside and executed by members of Sk 10b and Ek 12 in hilly land at a distance from the road.⁵⁸ After this execution - according to Nosske's recollection, that was sometime in the last ten days of August 1941 - they had to act quickly, since the Rumanians were determined by any means necessary to prevent the column from crossing the river. Nosske, accompanied by SS-Lieutenant. Heuer, proceeded to the Yampol Bridge; most of the Jewish column was camped in a broad hollow nearby. They located the “Jewish Elder” and gave him instructions on when and how the bridge would be crossed. At 1 a.m., the columns formed up, and Kommando members distributed food requisitioned from nearby collective farms.⁵⁹ While the columns were forming up, the German bridge commander succeeded in keeping the Rumanian bridge guard covered by “machine-guns positioned as a precaution.” The Rumanian bridge officer sped off on his motorcycle, presumably to report on what was occurring.⁶⁰ Bathed in bright moonlight, the columns trudged over the bridge at Yampol for some 2-3 hours, one column

⁵⁷ Ibid., Statement by Dr. Erwin H., vol. 7, p. 1604.
⁵⁸

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 1016.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Statement by Dr. Erwin H., vol. 7, p. 1605.

following closely on the heels of the next.⁶¹ Yet the people were not out of danger: Kommando members could hear frequent gunfire resounding from the western side of the Dniester, and it was probably clear to everyone who the Rumanians were shooting at.

Columns of Jews were not only expelled at Yampol. At Kamenets-Podolsk as well, members of SK 10b succeeded via a pontoon bridge to send a large number of Jews who had been deported there back into the Bukovina.⁶² By contrast, Sk 11a had encountered no comparable friction with the Rumanians at the Karantin bridge; in this area, the Rumanians were gathering able-bodied Jews in labor camps, in some cases bringing in workers from as far afield as central Rumania.⁶³ Thus, by the end of August, Einsatzgruppe D had

⁶¹ Ibid., Testimony, Gustav Nosske, vol. 4, p. 1016. See also: EM 64, August 26, 1941, BAK, R 58/216, "Despite considerable protest from the Rumanian bridge commander, a Jewish transport numbering about 6,000 [from Mogilev-Podolsk, A.A.] was deported to the area across the Dniester."

⁶² Testimony, Siegfried Schuchart, 22 Js 203/61, Staatsanwaltschaft München I, vol. 5, p. 1094. Other persons involved have also confirmed that a Kommando unit under Schuchart was stationed for a time in Kamenets-Podolsk, a town which actually belonged to the area assigned to Einsatzgruppe C. See, for example, testimony, Franz H., *ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 1641 and Testimony, Erik F., vol. 11, p. 2591. However, it is assumed that members of the Kommando in Mogilev-Podolsk were also active in Kamenets-Podolsk.

⁶³ On August 2, 1941, the Sk 11a, together with the responsible section of the Geheime Feldpolizei (Field Security Police), Sec. II of GFP - Group 647, were ordered to supervise the mass of persons streaming back westward and to prevent Jews from being expelled to the east. See: "Generalkommando LIV.A.K., Abt.Ic/A.O. vom 2.8.41, An den Führer des Sonderkommandos Xla Herrn SS-Sturmbannführer Zapp.", MAP, microfilm 56748, fr. 954; "Geheime Feldpolizei 647, Koat II beim LIV.A.K., Tgb.-Nr. 77/41 vom 2.8.1941, An den Stab der Geheimen Feldpolizei 647 beim A.O.K. 11.", *ibid.*, fr. 945. During the subsequent period, neither reported about any difficulties at the Dniester crossing points. For the Sk 11a, see Nuremberg Doc. NO-2067, "Der Beauftragte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD beim Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeresgebiet Süd, Sonderkommando 11a, Tgb. 83/41 vom 4.8.1941, Betrifft: Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Sonderkommandos in der Zeit vom 17. Juli bis 3. August und die Einsatzplanung für die erste Augushälfte 1941." On the concentration of Jews in labor camps in Bessarabia, see "Die Gesandtschaft in Bukarest an das Auswärtige Amt," August 6, 1941, reproduced in ADAP, Series D, vol. XIII/1, 238-39.

completed the bloody return of the expelled Jews to Rumania, just as Woehler had wished. The unit summed up its work:

Rumanians had driven thousands of specially selected persons, those infirm and unable to work, along with children, from Bessarabia and Bukovina into German-controlled territory. A total of some 27,500 Jews [were] forced back into Rumanian territory at Svanitsa-Mogilev-Podolsk and Yampol, and 1,265, some of them younger adults, shot.⁶⁴

Although Einsatzgruppe D no longer had anything to do with this cynical policy of shunting human beings back and forth like cattle, the matter was far from finished as far as the Rumanians and the German military and civilian authorities were concerned. It had still not been determined what was to be done with the Jews deported to Kamenets-Podolsk. Their fate was sealed in a meeting headed by the Quartermaster-General Wagner and the Chief of Military Administration Schmidt von Altenstadt; otherwise, the main topic discussed at the session was the transfer of the territory under military rule to the civil administration of the Reich Commissariat Ukraine. The Higher Police and SS Leader Friedrich Jeckeln (responsible for the rear lines of communication in Army Area South and the Reich Commissariat Ukraine), who did not attend the meeting, had hastily offered to solve the “problem” for all concerned by promising to “liquidate” the Jews by September 1.⁶⁵ None of the participants objected.

⁶⁴ EM 67, August 29, 1941, BAK, R 58/216

⁶⁵ Nuremberg Doc. PS-197: “Vermerk über die im OKH stattgefundene Besprechung wegen Übernahme eines Teils der Ukraine in Zivilverwaltung am 27.8.1941 in Berlin.” Others participating included *Oberregierungsrat* Dr. Labs, Dr. Brautigam, Major Wagner (all from the Ministry for the East), Ministerial Director Dr. Danckwerts (head of the Dept. Administration in the group Military Administration in the office of the Quartermaster-General), Col. (Gen. Staff) von Krosigk (head of the general staff, Bessarabia Rear South), *Regierungspräsident* Dargel (as representative of Reich Commissioner Erich Koch) and a representative of the staff of the Wehrmacht Command-in-Chief for the Ukraine. See Gerald Reitlinger, *Endlösung* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1983), p. 468. Originally appeared in English, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1961).

Units under Jeckeln's command immediately began preparing for the massacre, and the killing commenced in Kamenets-Podolsk on August 27, continuing for three days. According to Jeckeln's reports of mission completed sent to Himmler, with copies to the RSHA, Police (Orpo) HQ and the Kommandostab *Reichsführer-SS*, his Special Operations Staff (Sonderaktionsstab) executed 4,200 Jews on August 27, 11,000 on August 28 and "another 7,000 Jews" on August 29. In a mistaken calculation, a radio message noted: "Total number of Jews liquidated in the operation in Kamenets-Podolsk around 20 thousand."⁶⁶ Jeckeln, who was also preparing SS-Brigadir.General. Gerret Korsemann, the future HSSPF Caucasus also responsible for Einsatzgruppe D, for his new job at the time,⁶⁷ was the architect of a massive bloodbath, slaughtering men, women and children in huge bomb craters outside Kamenets-Podolsk. Standing together with Wehrmacht officers on a nearby hill, he himself supervised the "work" of his subordinates. The victims were forced to run through a line of guards made up of regular police from Police Battalion 320, the so-called "hosepipe," to the craters; there they had to throw their possessions to one side, and some were also ordered to disrobe. Finally, they were compelled to climb down into the crater, lie down on top of the bodies of those who had already been murdered, and were then killed instantaneously by a shot to the base of the skull. "Forbearance" was only shown for the riflemen: if any marksman was unable (or no longer able) to kill small children, he could ask to be relieved, drink

⁶⁶ Military Archive Prague (MA Prague), "Kdo. S. RFSS, i.e.3," unpag.: radio messages of the HSSPF Russia South, August 27, 28 and 29, 1941. These radio messages can also be found in BA, Branch Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten, Z/B 6735, binder II. See: EM 80, September 11, 1941, BAK, R 58/217, where the number of victims is given as 23,600. See also Yehoshua Büchler, "Kommandostab Reichsführer -SS: Himmler's Personal Murder Brigades in 1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 1:1, (1986), pp. 11-25.

⁶⁷ BDC (Berlin Document Center) SSO Korsemann. Effective from July 3, 1941, Korsemann was assigned until further notice - for all practical purposes, until he took over as HSSPF Caucasus - to serve with the HSSPF Russia South. Ohlendorf also had to report to Jeckeln. He likewise did not deny that he knew Korsemann. Ohlendorf did not say how often he met with Jeckeln or what questions they discussed. Moreover, the interrogator Wartenberg did not press the uncooperative Ohlendorf for any further information. See IFZ, ZS 278, vol. II, interrogation Otto Ohlendorf, December 12, 1946.

some schnapps, take a break, and then return if possible to resume work at the pit.⁶⁸ With the massacre at Kamenets-Podolsk, mass murder ordered by the state reached new heights.

While Jeckeln had now made mass murder an acceptable and recognized instrument of population policy for the civil and military authorities in the Ukraine by this massacre in Kamenets-Podolsk, the German and Rumanian military reached an agreement in Tighina on August 30 regarding the “security, administration and economic exploitation of the area between the Dniester and Bug (Transnistria) and the Bug and Dnieper (Bug-Dnieper Area).” According to its terms, Transnistria was completely under Rumanian control, while in the Bug-Dnieper Area, the Germans retained responsibility for administration and economic exploitation, the Rumanians for security. For the Jews in this area, the negotiation partners came up with a different “solution” than that devised by Jeckeln in Kamenets-Podolsk:

Deportation of the Jews across the Bug is not possible at the present moment. They must therefore be gathered together in concentration camps and deployed as laborers until deportation to the East becomes feasible after conclusion of the operations.⁶⁹

The understanding was signed by Brigadir.General. Tataranu for the Royal Rumanian Supreme General Staff, and by the newly appointed head of the DHM in Rumania, Major General. Hauffe, representing the Army Supreme Command. On September 2, in final comments on the operation, the 11th Army High Command justified its actions to the Army Supreme Command, stating that, to date, it had not deported any Jews from the Ukraine to Bessarabia, but had, in cooperation with the Security Police, returned Jews to

⁶⁸ Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen (ZStL; Central Office, State Justice Administrations, Ludwigsburg) 204 AR-Z 48/58, vol. 23, testimony, Karl R., pp. 3774-77 and testimony, Herbert St., pp. 3829-31.

⁶⁹ “Vereinbarung über Sicherung, Verwaltung und Wirtschaftsausbeutung des Gebietes zwischen Dnjestr und Bug (Transnistrien und Bug und Dnjepr (Bug-Dnjepr-Gebiet),” Tighina, August 30, 1941, MAP, microfilm WF-05/28300, fr. 238-42.

Bessarabia who had been expelled from there by Rumanian authorities. Finally, on September 8, 1941, although the Army Supreme Command (OKH) had authority for the theater of operations in the Soviet Union, the Armed Forces Supreme Command (OKW) issued orders that the German authorities should not intervene in connection with the “expulsion [*Verschiebung*] of Jews” on what was now Rumanian-controlled territory between the Dniester and Bug Rivers. Any such deportations from Rumanian-controlled areas to territory administered by the Germans (and vice versa) “must in future be avoided.” On September 18, the German Embassy informed Bucharest about the decision.⁷⁰ The conflict between the Axis allies had thus been resolved.⁷¹ Neither the German nor the Rumanian military had been able to prevail in the question of deportation of Jews, but neither had “lost face.”

The events in Yampol became a “model” for German-Rumanian Jewish policy, since deliberate deportations of Jews into the area administered by the Germans occurred with even greater vehemence in 1942. After the Jewish

⁷⁰ “Das Auswärtige Amt an die Gesandtschaft in Bukarest,” September 8, 1941, reproduced in ADAP, Series D, vol. XIII/2, 431. The justification of the 11th Army High Command is given in fn. 2 to the document.

⁷¹ The expulsions, now systematic deportations, began again in fall 1941, after Einsatzgruppe D had already left the area. The transports were planned and carried out by the Rumanian administration and shipped Jews into the ghettos of Transnistria. In 1941, 28,391 persons were deported there from Czernowitz alone. In February 1942, further transports sent more than 10,000 Jews eastward into the Reich Commissariat Ukraine. Another 60,000 were due to follow. Since these deportations were at odds with the agreements reached at Tighina, the German Foreign Office formally protested in April 1942 and moved to stop the transports into the German-administered areas of the Ukraine. In August 1942, the Foreign Office proposed to the Rumanian government, that it should arrange to deport the Jewish population in Rumania to the Lublin District in the *Generalgouvernement* for “labor deployment” as well as “special treatment.” The Rumanian government rejected this and attempted to thwart it, generating tension and friction between the German and Rumanian authorities. In early 1942, the Germans were apparently worried that Jews might be deported to the Ukraine, particularly to Vinnitsa, not far from the *Führer* HQ, as indicated by a communication from Chief Detective Schmidt, the local responsible officer of the Reich Security Service; see: “Reichssicherheitsdienst, Gruppe GFP, Dienststelle, Sicherungsgruppe Ost vom 14.1.1942, an den Kommandeur des RSD, SS-Standartenführer Rattenhuber, Betreff: Judenfrage in Winniza und Umgebung.”, Osobu, 1323-2-230.

ghetto in Odessa proved too small, either due to poor judgment or premeditation-for the survivors of the large-scale mass killings confined there, and ghetto inmates were living in torpor on the streets or freezing in the bitter cold, the situation had become intolerable even for the Rumanian municipal administration. So they came up with the “time-proven” idea of solving the problem of living space and rations by expelling all supernumerary Jews from the city with the help of the Rumanian rural police.

The flood of refugees was channeled directly into the ethnic-German settlement area of Transnistria, which was under the control of the institutional successor to Einsatzgruppe D, the Special Kommando R (Sk-R) of the Ethnic-German Agency (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, Vomi), and the Ethnic-German Defense League (Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz), and commanded by SS-Colonel. Horst Hoffmeyer. In January 1942, the columns reached the district of the Sk-R of Worms, one of the ethnic-German towns in the Ukraine. The local regional commander there, SS-Lieutenant. Streit, was taken by complete surprise by the torrent of refugees and overwhelmed by the situation; he travelled to the HQ of Sk-R in Landau and reported that tens of thousands of Odessa Jews, prodded by the Rumanian rural police, were now crossing through his area on the way to the River Bug. Streit requested directives on how to proceed. After consultation with the relevant section head, Streit was given strict orders to prevent any Jews, if necessary by force of arms, from entering the ethnic-German villages. Weak and helpless Jews lying at the edge of the road were to be “liquidated, with the help of the Ethnic-German Defense League.”⁷²

ufiger Abschlussbericht der Zentralen Stelle Ludwigsburg vom 7² “Vorl 7.9.1942,” 141 Js 1519/62, Staatsanwaltschaft Hamburg, vol. 2, p. 245. It should be noted that this passage in the final ZStL report is based on an account originally drawn up by one of the participants for purposes of blackmail: it was written in order to extort a payoff for its non-publication from two members of the Sk R who, unlike its author, had enjoyed a successful postwar career. Nevertheless, this account was later included in the investigation's documentation. In its cautious assessment of this account, the State Prosecutor's Office proceeded on the assumption that the data it contained largely corresponded nonetheless with the true facts, and that was also confirmed by the author during his own interrogation. I located the original article itself in 45 Js 26/62 der Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund, vol. 9, fols. 125-33, entitled “50,000 Juden aus Odessa,” Tatsachenbericht von X.X.”

Streit executed these orders. He reported to Landau that in the operations, 3,000 Jews in his region had been shot and their bodies subsequently burned on large pyres. The bulk of Jewish refugees now streamed to the northeast toward the General Commissariat Nikolaiev. The miserable columns halted near Vossenensk, not far from German-controlled territory, where it was difficult to cross the wide Bug River, and awaited their fate in the ethnic-German area under the control of the regional Kommandos in Lichtenfeld and Rastatt.⁷³

The commanders of these two Kommandos, SS-Lieutenant. Franz Liebl and SS-Captain. Rudolf Hartung, were now faced with the same difficult decision as their colleague in Worms: the Jews were not to be pushed off further into the German administrative area; they did not wish to feed them; it was also out of the question to return them to the Rumanians, since they were on Rumanian-controlled territory.⁷⁴ Their commanding officer, Sk-R Commander Hoffmeyer, did not want to decide the matter on his own. Thus in January 1942 he went to Berlin in order to confer with Vomi directly about what should be done. After consultation with the department head Werner Lorenz and his deputy Ellermeyer, and with the RSHA, Hoffmeyer understood that Himmler had issued a general order to annihilate the Jews in his area of control. Since developments on the Rumanian side were now irreversible, and due to a lack

[the author's name was intentionally withheld, A.A.]. Dr. Wolfrum categorically denied any responsibility for the executions, see 45 Js 26/62 der Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund, vol. 34, testimony, Dr. Gerhard W., p. 104.
⁷³ Ibid., pp. 245-46; "50,000 Juden aus Odessa," *ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Ibid; "50,000 Juden aus Odessa," 141 Js 1519/62, Staatsanwaltschaft Hamburg, vol. 4, testimony, Walter V., p. 526. Those still alive among the Jews who had managed to flee to German-administered territory - the Foreign Office assumed a total figure of some 10,000 - were immediately sent back to Odessa in Rumanian-controlled territory at the request of the General Commissioner of Nikolaiev. See "Vortragsnotiz des Unterstaatssekretars Luther," February 11, 1942, reproduced in ADAP, Series E, vol. 1, p. 405; BA, Branch Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten, Doc. P 2748: "Der Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete Nr.I 100 geh., vom 19.5.1942, an das Auswärtige Amt z.H. von Herrn Legationsrat Rademacher oder Vertreter im Amt, Auf das nischen Schreiben vom 12 ds. Mts. -D III 402 g-, Betr.: Abschiebung von rum Juden in das Reichskommissariat Ukraine, Im Auftrag, gez. Dr.Brautigam."

of other SS units in the area, Hoffmeyer was ordered to kill all Jews under his control, utilizing the Sk-R and the Selbstschutz for the job.⁷⁵

After returning to Landau, Hoffmeyer informed the commanders Liebl and Hartung of the Berlin orders. It was decided to redirect the Jews waiting at Vossenensk to Beresovska, under a guard of the Rumanian rural police, and to murder them there. According to the statement by a witness directly involved, Hoffmeyer was angered after the first improvised mass murders (the annihilation of the Jews expelled from Odessa in Vossenensk), and paid a visit to the governor of Transnistria, Gheorge Alexianiu, “in order to prevent further transports.” The only reason for this meeting was the uncontrolled deportations by the Rumanians, which constituted an obstacle for German-Rumanian relations from the perspective of Vomi, the Reich Commissariat Ukraine - and, at this juncture, even in the eyes of Eichmann’s Department IV B4 in the RSHA (the office specializing in Jewish affairs). Yet no decision was reached to end the extermination operations; on the contrary, it was decided they should be better coordinated. The Rumanians had no desire whatsoever to halt their “policy of ethnic removal and ethnic restructuring” in any way.

From May 1942 on, there were no further deportations to German-administered territory; now the methodical slaughter of the Jews in Transnistria itself began in earnest. The Rumanians transported the Jews on trains, in some cases even from the core area of Old Rumania via Galatz, into the ethnic-German areas. There, the Selbstschutz took charge of them; if necessary, they were deployed briefly at forced labor, and then murdered when extermination units became available to carry out the killings. There are extant reports from the Rumanian rural police on additional mass executions perpetrated by the Defense League near Beresovska and in Mostovoi, at least for March and May 1942; and there are statements on mass killings in the autumn of 1942 by survivors of the deportation. Thus, less than a year after the events in Yampol, the Rumanians had succeeded in setting up their own annihilation center in the northeast of Transnistria, although this would have been impossible without the support of the Ethnic-German Selbstschutz.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 141 Js 1519/62, ‘Vorläufiger Abschlussbericht,’ p. 246; vol. 4, testimony, Walter Vahldieck, p. 526; Ibid., “50,000 Juden aus Odessa”.

Paradoxically, in contrast with what has been described, there was another element in German-Rumanian anti-Jewish policy that had been touched on indirectly at the Wannsee Conference and was not merely an empty phrase: the idea to deport the Jews to the East while “constructing roads ... in the course of which a large proportion of them undoubtedly [would perish] as a result of natural reduction.”⁷⁶ In August 1942, that had long since become a harrowing reality in connection with the construction of the highway DG 4 from Lvov to Stalino. Moreover, the plan was to extend this extremely important supply artery, on which work had been started in October 1941, down into the Caucasus region to service the southern section of the front. As early as March 1942, it was evident that O.T., the agency charged with the completion of this project, did not have sufficient POWs, forced laborers and civilian workers at its disposal for the job, and this lack of personnel became more acute in the summer of that year.⁷⁷ Along with the O.T., SS agencies and police units under the Task Force Gieseke (which in turn was subordinate to the HSSPF Ukraine) were also deployed on construction of DG 4.⁷⁸ Among other things, their job was to provide the necessary workers and to guarantee the security of the road.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Nuremberg Doc. NG-2586-G. Undated minutes of the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, D III 29g Rs., reproduced in ADAP, Series E, vol. 1, pp. 267-75, here p. 271. See also Wolfgang Scheffler and Helge Grabitz, “Die Wannsee-Konferenz. Ihre Bedeutung in der Geschichte des Ikermonds,” *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, No. 3nationalsozialistischen V 1715 (1995), pp197-219, esp. 213.

⁷⁷ “Bfh. rückw. H. Geb. Süd, Abt. VII vom 16.3.1942, Lagebericht.”, BAP, microfilm 13677, fr. 1513-27

⁷⁸ It is documented that Himmler gave instructions at the beginning of February 1942 to Hans Adolf Prützmann, the HSSPF Ukraine/Russia South, to begin work on construction of the “Black Sea road,” i.e. DG 4. See BDC, SSO Prützmann: “Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr., RF/V., Führerhauptquartier 7 [added in longhand, A.A.], Febr. 1942, An alle Hauptamtchefs.”

⁷⁹ “Verfügung vom 26.5.1970 in Lübeck,” 2 AR 711/65 der Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Lübeck, pp. 80-99. This deals with the application for preliminary investigative proceedings against Oskar F. and Hans W., and cessation of proceedings against various other defendants.

By August 1942, the labor shortage had become so obvious and critical that SS-Captain Franz Christoffel on the section of road construction at Gaisin felt compelled to remove Jewish laborers from Rumanian concentration camps⁸⁰ near Ladyzyn and transport them into German-administered territory. After he had failed in his initial attempts to have the Rumanians hand over the Jewish prisoners, he was able to “woo” the inmates away from the Rumanians by promising them good accommodations and food. He even held out the possibility of homes for the elderly and the children.

Unaware of most of the crimes committed by the Germans and as a result of their harassment at the hands of the Rumanians, many of the prisoners succumbed to Christoffel's solicitations, falsely assuming that he was not lying.⁸¹ Finally, the Rumanians also released forced laborers who wanted to switch over to the Germans:

We were happy to be able finally to work under the Germans. We thought we'd have it better working for a civilized people rather than for the more or less filthy Rumanians. We went on foot to Ladyzyn. Already on the way there, Ukrainian militiamen told us what awaited us with the Germans. We didn't believe it.⁸²

In Tulczyn and Peczara, where a segment of the Jews deported from Czernowitz and Dorohoi had been brought in the fall of 1941, a German “recruiter” also showed up, Police Constable Alfred Jähning. He likewise recruited Jewish forced laborers for work on DG 4. After bringing them over the Bug, they were distributed among various labor camps or sections of the SS Construction Office Gaisin, where they were added to the contingents of Jews already deployed at slave labor.⁸³

⁸⁰ The prisoners were from the camps Cariera de Pietra and Czetwertynovka.

⁸¹ 2 AR 711/65 der Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Lübeck, “Verfügung,” pp. 75-76.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 76. From testimony of the survivor Zvi Rauchberger.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.

In the area of the HSSPF Ukraine/Russia South, the total number of laborers deployed in 1942 comprised some 50,000 local workers, 50,000 POWs, and also 10,000 Jewish prisoners.⁸⁴ Thus, if there were material constraints for the Germans, such as an urgent need for laborers, they, even HSSPF Prützmann, were certainly prepared to deviate from the customary practice of liquidation. Again and again, however, there were unannounced selections. Exhausted or sick laborers, or those no longer needed for a particular labor section, were ruthlessly liquidated by members of the Police Security Dept. DG IV or the police battalions on duty. However, the preponderant majority of prisoners remained alive until it became evident that in the light of the military setbacks on the southern front, construction project DG 4 would have to be scrapped. The result was the liquidation of forced labor camps beginning toward the end of 1942, and the murder of Jewish prisoners who were still fit to work. A small number of camps (such as that in Tarassivka) remained in operation for nearly another year, until December 1943.⁸⁵

In conclusion, if we look at the history of the Rumanian policy of expulsion and deportation overall in terms of the events in Yampol, the deportations within Transnistria, and the deployment on construction of DG 4-it would appear that the Jews of Transnistria, Bessarabia and Bukovina were not annihilated as the result of any systematic plan. Rather, they were maltreated and abused in the German-Rumanian power game, manipulated as an expendable mass devoid of any rights, exploited as laborers to the point of exhaustion and finally murdered. This and the high tide of murder operations in 1942 cast clear doubts on the existence in 1941 of any comprehensive order for the

Ibid., p. 81. According to this, about 70,000 persons were also used as laborers in 1943. This contrasts with Prützmann's indication in his cable of June 15, 1943 that there were some 140,000 deployed in construction work on the DG 4. It is possible that he casually included the workers on the construction section in Galicia in this figure, who were not under his command. See BDC, SS-HO 1249: "HSSPF Kiev Nr. 1107, 15/6, 1625, an Feldkommandostelle Reichsführer SS, z.H. SS-Obersturmbannführer Brandt, gez. Prützmann," June 15, 1943.

⁸⁵ "Verfügung," 2 AR 711/65 der Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Lübeck, pp. 387-408.

“Final Solution” for all Jews in Europe. Rather, it is reasonable to assume that a “solution” for the “problem of Eastern Jewry” was initially conceived in terms of the respective regional factors, and only later, as a result of developments that were interdeterminate and had a reciprocal radicalizing effect, was this amplified into the concept of the “Final Solution.” Yet that only becomes clear to the observer in retrospect, piecing together the stones of the mosaic of events.

Translated by William Templer

Source: Yad Vashem Studies, Vol XXVI, Jerusalem 1998, pp.203-238.