

Lands of *Unkultur*: mass violence, corpses, and the Nazi imagination of the East

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On 1 June 1943 Herr Lange, a political advisor in the civilian administration of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia, delivered a report regarding a recent *Bandenaktion*, or anti-partisan operation, to his superiors in Minsk.¹ He noted that during a punishment action in the district of Borrisow, German troops and their local collaborators had herded the inhabitants into a large barn. Once inside they were shot and the building was then set on fire. However, it only partially burned and when Lange visited the scene a few days later he found the unburned bodies of the victims still piled inside the half-ruined structure. Wild animals had dragged some of the corpses into the village streets and surrounding fields, and mutilated bodies were scattered over the landscape. Commenting further on the poor performance of the troops, upon later investigation he discovered some of the victims were merely wounded in the shooting. Despite their injuries these survivors had managed to drag themselves out from under the bodies of their neighbours and were later taken to a local hospital, where they told others about the atrocity.²

The report was not a protest against the brutality visited on the rural inhabitants of a Belarusian village. On the contrary, it simply assessed the operation and offered insights into what aspects needed to be corrected in future missions. Lange was undoubtedly repulsed by what he saw, and his superiors themselves noted in the transcription of the meeting that “The verbal report from

Political Advisor Lange concerning an incident during a recent anti-partisan operation is hardly pleasant [*wenig erfreulich*].³ This revulsion stemmed not only from the physical aftermath of the murders, but from the fact that the German-led operation was conducted in a manner allowing for a type of chaos and disorder which was not only unsanitary but also failed to conceal the crime, letting wounded civilians escape to tell their tale, encouraging the growing resistance movement in the region. Embedded in the report was the implicit idea that violence committed by the occupational authorities should be precise and efficient, embodying their self-perceived national character. As a *Kulturvolk*, or ‘cultured people’, Germans were obliged to kill in certain ways, which set them apart from their uncivilized, brutal enemies in the East.

Through an examination of the anti-partisan war in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia, this chapter assesses how Germans’ cultural stereotypes of Eastern Europeans drove the extreme forms of violence visited on the region. As historian Alon Confino has recently argued, scholars should begin to pay closer attention to the ways in which imagination and fantasy interacted with state ideology, to expose ‘people’s tendency to think outside, against, underneath, and above it’. Such efforts do not attempt to discount or minimize the role of ideology in mass violence, but rather underscore that ideology is a part of culture and therefore remains linked with a longer continuity of mentalities which feed into it, justify it, and form its foundation.⁴

This argument works well for the subject of the German vision of the East. As Vejas Liulevicius has noted, a longer trajectory of German thought vis-à-vis Eastern Europe existed prior to the Nazis, one largely articulated through notions of cultural struggle, with the supposed Germanic traits of order, proficiency, and cleanliness locked in a life-or-death battle with the allegedly disease-ridden, primitive, and morally corrupt East. Germans often described these lands as areas of *Unkultur*, literally ‘devoid of culture’, which were therefore enticing due to the seemingly unlimited possibilities they offered colonizers, as the land and its people could be shaped to fit their vision. As such, Eastern Europe had long provoked a plethora of fantasies, which merged with the Nazi vision of an eastern utopia to be won at the expense of the local inhabitants.⁵

Co-mingling with optimistic imaginings of the future were deep feelings of disgust, as the East was repulsive in its current, natural state. For example, during his post-war trial, a former member of a police unit stationed in the Generalkommissariat recalled, ‘It was

like the Wild West, a hundred years ago in America'. This ground-level vision of an untamed wilderness populated by unruly savages was also held at the highest echelons of the Nazi state. In August 1942, commenting on the rising resistance in the East, Hitler remarked: 'The struggle we are waging there against the partisans resembles very much the struggle in North America against the Red Indians ... at all costs we will establish law and order there'.⁶ Such cultural fantasies regarding a lawless East, ironically encouraged by the efforts directed at mastering it, and the atrocities that occurred in Weissruthenia only served to perpetuate preconceptions of its inherent barbarity as they plunged the region into catastrophe.

The corpses of the occupation's victims played a key role in encouraging mass violence. As subhumans inhabiting the wilderness on the edge of Nazi empire, the dead of Eastern Europe were treated in ways which broke with European traditions regarding death and burial. Hung from trees or left to rot in the smouldering ruins of destroyed villages, the corpses were put on display, expressing the occupiers' contempt and marking them as something other than human. Aside from the deliberate attempt to dehumanize the indigenous population by desecrating the dead, the scattered, decaying remains generated disgust among those directly responsible for enforcing Nazi policies and reinforced the perception that the East was a primitive place in need of violent transformation. Over the course of the German anti-partisan war, a destructive dynamic emerged in which each brutal search-and-destroy operation failed to eliminate the partisan threat and only enhanced perceptions of Eastern Europe as a wild place beyond law and order. This perception called for ever more ruthless measures against the civilian population. The treatment and display of corpses contributed to the expansion of mass violence between 1941 and 1944.

The war against banditry

The anti-partisan war allows scholars to examine the reciprocal relationship between cultural fantasy and atrocity. Unlike Nazi persecutions of ethnic minorities such as the Jews and Roma, the anti-partisan war struck the entire population of Eastern Europe. It not only internalized these genocides, casting the victims as partisans alongside their Slavic neighbours. Efforts to eliminate resistance, perceived or otherwise, also caused widespread social

and economic collapse, hindering efforts at colonial exploitation and thereby radicalizing notions of Eastern primitiveness. Furthermore, partisans were a central figure in the image of 'the Wild East', as they best embodied the supposed character of the local population.

The East was considered by the Nazis to be the cradle of so-called 'Judeo-Bolshevism', and even prior to 1933 German politicians and military leaders paid close attention to developments within the Soviet Union. Of prime interest was the Russian Civil War, and this conflict played a crucial role in shaping German thought regarding the civilian population of the Soviet state and its neighbours. The terror and forced population removals visited on regions such as the Don Basin and the western borderlands during this period projected the idea that the Soviet regime had jettisoned the civil-military distinctions governing the conduct of European militaries. These acts were interpreted as the removal of traditional forms of restraint, creating a new form of conflict the Germans termed *Volkskrieg*, or 'people's war', which involved the direct participation of the entire civilian population. Due to the manner in which it was conducted, *Volkskrieg* was interpreted by German military planners as barbaric. The Russian Civil War and the social engineering projects which followed also buttressed stereotypes of the Soviets as fanatics and Eastern peoples in general as desensitized to violence, able to respond only to brutal forms of governance. These tropes were later enhanced by the racial dogma of the Nazi regime after 1933, which biologized these notions and underscored the idea that a war in the East would be a conflict unparalleled in the history of warfare, in terms of both scope and violence.⁷

This was starkly evidenced by Directive Number 21, issued to German troops by the Wehrmacht High Command on the eve of the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. It remarked, 'Bolshevism is the mortal enemy of the National Socialist German people ... this war demands the ruthless suppression of bolshevist snipers, guerrillas, saboteurs, Jews, and the complete elimination of active or passive resistance'.⁸ The military clearly expected the entire population to resist the German advance, as this was a war of peoples rather than of militaries; the Germans thereby in effect launched a type of *Volkskrieg* of their own on the Soviet Union, by eroding the distinctions between civilians and combatants within its territory. Such orders highlighted the supposed fanatical, savage, and underhand nature of Eastern peoples.

Contrary to these expectations, however, the invaders initially found little resistance from the local population and Stalin's call

on 1 July for scorched earth and a guerrilla war behind the Front went largely unanswered.⁹ During this period, the greatest threat to the occupiers came from members of the Red Army cut off during the opening days of the invasion, and, overall, the threat remained relatively small. Regardless, soldiers were ordered not to let their guard down. Commanders of rear-area garrison and police units spent the quiet autumn months formatting guidelines and honing tactics for the war they expected to fight. For example, in late September 1941, General Max von Schenkendorff held a conference in Mogilev for police and military commanders from the rear area of Army Group Centre. Over the course of the three-day meeting, officers shared their experiences to date and brainstormed plans for future confrontations with partisans. The meeting concluded with a demonstration of tactics, and the participants witnessed a company of police cordon off and search a village. Thirty-two of the inhabitants were executed, all of them Jewish, since actual partisans could not be found, exposing the relationship between genocide and the dictates of rear-area security.¹⁰

The outcome of such intellectual exchanges was a series of handbooks issued to soldiers and police stationed in the East. These publications quoted Stalin's call for a partisan war behind the Front and cast the Soviets as guerrilla fighters par excellence. They reiterated the message that the entire civilian population was suspect, as women, small children, and even the elderly, traditionally non-combatants, often worked for the partisans as spies and couriers. In order to drive home the message that the occupational troops were fighting an inhuman enemy, the manuals reprinted captured documents detailing partisan tactics, stressing their penchant for 'dirty' or 'unfair' attacks, such as ambushes and the mining of roadways. One such captured document instructed recruits to take the following oath: 'I, a citizen of the Soviet Union and loyal son of the heroic Russian people, swear to eliminate every fascist snake that stands on Russian soil'.¹¹

In the face of such apparent, and often manufactured, fanaticism, one document, drafted by Heinrich Himmler, the head of all anti-partisan operations in occupied Europe, advised German soldiers that 'The most important qualifications for combating this criminality are good nerves [and] a fearless heart'. Another document, drafted by an officer with experience of fighting partisans, encouraged troops to be 'tirelessly active, comradely, and hard', like their opponents. In short, Germans were to conduct themselves in ways similar to their supposedly merciless and

barbaric enemies in the East, encouraging the pre-emptive use of ruthless violence out of proportion to the actual threat. This notion was encouraged by Hitler, who ordered, due the nature of the partisan war, that the military and police forego adherence to the Geneva Convention.¹²

The correspondence regarding the anti-partisan war further criminalized the activities of the enemy. As Jonathan Gumz has pointed out in his work on the anti-partisan war in the Balkans, German military and police personnel often used technocratic language in order to distinguish their violence from the supposedly irrational forms of atrocity committed by the indigenous population.¹³ Reports from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia also reflected this tendency. Officers described anti-partisan operations in clinical terms such as *Säuberung des Geländes*, or ‘cleansing the landscape’, and those killed had been given ‘special treatment’ (*Sonderbehandelt*), populations were ‘evacuated’ (*Evakuierte*), as a euphemism for murder, and once a mission ended the targeted areas had been ‘pacified’ (*Befriedete Gebiete*), whereas the reality was that the local population had been either killed or forcibly removed.¹⁴

In contrast, the partisans and their activities were described in dramatic emotional terms; attacks were raids (*Überfallen*), cast at best as annoyances (*Unwesen*), or at worst as murder and robbery (*Mord und Raub*). The partisans were described as criminals; they allegedly plundered villages and towns and were described as bandits (*Banden*) or sometimes as a plague (*Pest*) haunting the land. Keeping in tandem with such quasi-biological language, locations deemed under their control were described as *Bandenverseuchtegebiete*, literally ‘areas infested with bandits’, conjuring the image of a dangerous and spreading menace. These medical tropes were also reflected in maps created by the security forces. Many were covered in circles with the numbers of suspected insurgents written within, and were constantly updated. To the observer, Weissruthenia appeared to be covered in shifting coloured splotches of various sizes and shapes, much like the body of an epidemic victim, calling to mind the imaginings of disease and contamination long associated with the East.¹⁵

In September 1942, Führer Directive Number 46, *Instructions for Intensified Action Against Banditry in the East*, institutionalized this language, ordering that the term ‘bandit’ replace the word ‘partisan’ in all correspondence, in an effort to coordinate policy and encourage aggressiveness.¹⁶ This decree effectively criminalized resistance while simultaneously extending what was deemed to be

part of the anti-partisan effort to action against common criminality such as black marketeering, petty theft, and smuggling, which were in fact caused by the occupation's exploitative economic policies. The term 'bandit' was vague enough to encompass a variety of meanings, and grew to encompass most of the civilian population. The definition also encouraged local initiative to pursue violent solutions, as it created a perception that Germans in the East were under siege at every turn. By its very definition, the word 'bandit' connoted outsiders who lived on the margins of civilization and attacked towns and villages, that is, attacked civilization itself. Hence this deliberate merging of political resistance with everyday criminality indiscriminately expanded the anti-partisan campaign to the entire civilian population of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia and radicalized pre-existing stereotypes of the region as a lawless, merciless land of outlaws, and led to the unleashing of extreme forms of violence.

The atrocities encouraged the desecration and defilement of the corpses of the victims. Standing outside the boundaries of European cultural affinity in the eyes of the Germans, and demonized by racial dogma and the violent language of occupation, the dead bodies of civilians killed during anti-partisan sweeps were inscribed with the contempt of their killers, set on display or denied a proper burial, and simply left to lie where they fell. These acts themselves helped perpetuate and exacerbate the very stereotypes fuelling mass murder in the region.

Land and body: atrocity and aftermath in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia

In spring 1942 the German doctrine on combating partisans shifted. The guerrilla threat was growing, due not only to the Soviet's increasing success at inserting reinforcements, advisors, and supplies behind the lines, but also to the economic policies of the occupational administration. Prior to this period, efforts to contain the partisan movement were sporadic, consisting mostly of foot patrols, the taking of hostages, fines against the civilian population, and select mass reprisals, such as executions and the burning of villages. Security forces complained about these methods, arguing they failed to comprehensively address the growing threat. Decisions were then made to conduct so-called 'large operations' (*Grossunternehmen*), in which Wehrmacht

divisions would operate alongside police units and their local auxiliaries across wide stretches of territory in order to extend the administration's control.¹⁷

This change was crucial, as these operations transferred military tactics into civilian areas, essentially waging war on the local population. Troops, working from information passed on by informers, bracketed off large swaths of the region, seeking to encircle partisan forces and cut off their escape routes. The space inside these 'cauldrons' was then reduced in size until units reached the centre, then swept their way outwards, hoping to catch any stragglers who might have escaped the first sweep. These areas were essentially free-fire zones, and although troops worked their way through the tangled forests looking for partisan camps, the operations' main targets were villages suspected of supporting the resistance.¹⁸

German guidelines for these assaults called for an overwhelming show of force, and aircraft and artillery often bombarded these locations prior to the start of the operation.¹⁹ Shortly afterwards troops would arrive and surround the villages. Those villagers who attempted to escape or resisted were killed on the spot, and the rest of the population was gathered in the centre of the village and interrogated regarding the whereabouts of the partisans. Suspects were then executed on the scene, and the rest of the inhabitants were deported for slave labour; livestock and food supplies were usually removed. The villages were then set on fire, both to demonstrate the repercussions of assisting the enemy and to deny the partisans resources.²⁰

At ground level these actions created chaos. German troops entered villages and rounded up the population, and beat them with whips, rifle butts, and sticks as they attempted to separate those deemed 'work capable' (*Arbeitsfähig*) from the elderly, sick, and very young, who were to be executed or deported to languish in special camps. Unsurprisingly, some villagers resisted and scuffles and gun shots rang out among shouted orders and the cries of children. The thick smoke emanating from burning thatch and straw increased the tense atmosphere. Interrogations were carried out on the scene, with inhabitants and their children threatened at gunpoint in an effort to extract information about local partisan groups. Those found to have missing adult male family members or without identity papers were considered 'partisan supporters' and executed. In some cases entire villages were wiped out, either for their perceived resistance to the raids, or simply because they

were located on the edges of the forest, and thus associated with the partisans lurking within.²¹

In some locations the inhabitants were gathered together and forced to dig mass graves. At others, natural or pre-existing manmade depressions, such as gullies and ditches, were used. Other peasants were forced to fill them, underlining notions of collective punishment and reinforcing notions of their subhuman nature. However, during these operations units were under strict timetables to reach particular map coordinates by the end of each day, ensuring the area under assault would remain isolated. As a result, troops often dispensed with efforts to concentrate their victims at one prepared killing site, and massacres tended to decentralize into scattered, smaller shootings throughout the village. The bodies of the victims were left where they fell, for surviving members of the local population to attend to after the soldiers moved on.²²

German doctrine also called for the hanging of 'bandits'. Here, the bodies of the victims were used most directly as a vehicle to convey the occupation's power. This technique served as a spectacular form of communication, to express the Germans' ability to discipline those who resisted. Each displayed body also helped craft the image of the civilian population and the partisans as one and the same in the minds of the occupiers. Many villagers died by this method, and few resistance fighters were caught during raids by the occupation's troops. Hanging criminalized these victims through an act of punishment historically associated throughout Europe with banditry. This point was driven home by the signs hung around their necks, proclaiming their alleged 'crimes', such as theft, robbery, or looting. Many of the corpses were also displayed prominently on the main thoroughfares of towns, or at important intersections or crossroads, ensuring their view by the local populace. These public executions also called for a kind of collective participation different from other forms of murder. Soldiers gathered to watch the executions or to observe the bodies afterwards, posing with them for photographs, further dehumanizing the suspended victims as macabre trophies. Each suspended corpse symbolically served to assert the occupation's authority, and underscored the supposed criminal nature of the entire population, as their public display implied that these so-called bandits hailed from the people.

In some cases, these acts of spectacle came in the wake of the partisans' own efforts to use the corpses of their attackers to convey resistance to the occupation. For example, during one anti-partisan

operation, part of a group of Latvian police led by German officers was cut off from its detachment and annihilated. They were later found naked and mutilated in the woods, and when efforts were made to recover the bodies, the troops discovered they were mined. The unit which recovered the bodies a short time later burned several villages and killed their inhabitants in revenge for what they considered to be an especially underhand act.²³

One particularly gruesome method which arose from operational considerations was the immolation of victims. The commanders of anti-partisan operations considered the burning of bodies expedient, as it used the destruction of the villages to meet sanitary guidelines regarding the disposal of corpses, as noted in a report from Operation Winterzauber, in March 1943. One unit commander ordered that where suspects could not be handed over to the security police for 'special treatment' – summary executions in the forest – his men should shoot their prisoners in houses and cover the bodies with straw to encourage their immolation once the buildings were set alight. This tactic literally enacted the type of cleansing purge discussed in operational after-action reports. Additionally, the purifying properties of fire were also well advocated in German medical circles, and this literature appears to have encouraged such methods, as well as the idea that the East was literally and figuratively ridden with deadly bacteria (i.e. its people), which had to be rooted out and completely destroyed in order to conquer the region and allow *Kultur* to take hold.²⁴

Going one step further, many units burned their victims alive. Survivors recalled that soldiers often rushed into their homes and ordered them to lie on the floor, and in some cases their captors questioned them not only about local partisan activity but also about disease in the village or whether family members were sick. The buildings of those deemed guilty or a health risk were then set on fire, and anyone attempting to flee was shot. Barns in particular were considered good sites for these atrocities, because of their size and the ready supply of flammable material such as straw.²⁵

Other motives must be taken into consideration alongside such 'rational' explanations as the disposal of bodies. The methods used by the Germans were also chosen to destroy their victims not only physically but also emotionally. For villagers across Eastern Europe, fire was viewed as a catastrophe; one survivor recalled that 'even the earth groaned' as her village was destroyed, underscoring the significance of this rupture in the intricate weaving of nature and society which comprised peasant cosmology.²⁶ Buildings

constructed from wood and thatch were highly flammable, and even a small fire could destroy an entire community. Indeed, fire remained such an important collective concern that villagers often reserved their harshest punishments for members of the community who committed acts of arson.²⁷

After the war, the anti-partisan operations were remembered as an apocalypse made worse by the fact that the majority of the victims were denied proper burial. In many cases German units did not record information regarding their executions, and the locations of many mass graves remain unknown. In other cases the victims became visible only after the spring thaw, when the snow and ice covering them melted. Once uncovered, some merged with the mud, becoming part of the horrific landscape imagined by the Germans. Other bodies lay exposed for weeks, often unrecognizable even to surviving family members. Likewise, those villagers who managed to escape returned to the smouldering ashes of their villages to find immolated corpses, which would disintegrate once they were moved, in some cases making the effort of recovering the body of a loved one a traumatizing act in itself. Burials after the atrocity broke with traditional practices, as they took place in secret locations, in the woods or swamps, unconsecrated spaces traditionally associated with corruption and evil.²⁸ A common theme in the post-war dreams of survivors was visitation by deceased family members, expressing their continued pain and anguish, a sign of the guilt felt by their relatives' inability to provide proper burials. Through their very form, these atrocities denied a sense of closure and continued to terrorize the victims for decades after the event.²⁹

The violation of local custom caused by these crimes was likely known by the Germans. Many units garrisoned in the rear areas worked closely with local collaborators, and these militias often comprised the bulk of the manpower for anti-partisan operations. Additionally, due to the heavily forested terrain of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia, troops in the region were often decentralized in small groups when not participating in large manoeuvres, spread out across a variety of strong points in areas considered to be less of a security risk. At these fortifications they trained local personnel and worked closely with the population in order to cultivate informers. Consequently, many must have been at least partially aware of local customs. For example, in one case German troops deliberately selected the village bathhouse as a site of execution for five suspected female partisans. This landmark

served important village functions, and the murders desecrated this important social space, making it unusable. Thus even those locales spared from total destruction were environmentally and culturally affected by atrocity. Mass graves served an important, if unintentional, function in the Germans' scorched earth policy, as they poisoned groundwater, making villages and croplands unusable. They also attracted wild animals, creating yet another problem for survivors, while the killings also upended villagers' sense of cosmology, bringing the polluting forces of chaos and misfortune closer to their homes, angering local spirits, as allegedly evidenced by the earth moving as the graves shifted.³⁰

If the Germans knew they were violating local norms, they also consciously violated their own. Cremation, for example, remained a contentious form of corpse disposal inside Germany, despite endorsements within the medical community, as graves, particularly individual ones, conveyed humanity. The dead were sacred and their proper care in specifically designated areas was considered a distinguished mark of a civilized people. If improperly cared for, the dead were an expression of disorder, and the growing tempo of the air war against the Reich posed serious challenges to the Nazi regime's legitimacy. As Monica Black has noted, the charred and mutilated bodies found in the streets of German cities after bombing raids were 'matter out of place', which threatened to undermine notions of social and cultural order. The regime struggled to cope with the challenges posed by the treatment of these corpses, and even the efforts to generate support for mass burials met considerable civilian resistance.³¹

As Mary Douglas famously remarked in her work on contamination, taboos protect 'the local consensus on how the world is organized', and the Germans' deliberate violation of their own sacred views on the treatment of corpses consequently cast the East as a dirty, chaotic space, a monstrous land of *Unkultur* populated by subhumans, as reflected in the unburied bodies exposed by spring thaws or hanging from trees along the streets of villages burnt to their foundations.³² As Wilhelm B. remarked during his interrogation in 1975 by East German authorities regarding his participation in anti-partisan operations, 'The longer I stayed in the Soviet Union the more I hated the partisans'. Here 'the partisans' likely served as code for the civilian population at large. When asked about the motives behind the immolation of seventy villagers inside a barn near the village of Dmitrowo in 1943, he replied that his unit decided this was the most brutal and painful fashion in which

to murder their victims, evidencing the hatred they felt towards them. Each act of violence and its physical aftermath enhanced pre-existing stereotypes, increased disgust and frustration at the apparent backwardness of the region, and encouraged new forms of brutality, allowing the corpses themselves to become a message conveying the hatred directed at the population.³³

The anti-partisan operations of 1942–44 plunged the region into the type of catastrophic social and economic conditions the Germans expected to find during the invasion in June 1941. Enduring over 140 major sweeps and countless smaller actions, over 2 million of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia died during the four-year occupation. The extent of the devastation is doubly reflected by the roughly 5,000 villages destroyed. At 629 of these locations, the entire population perished, further reflecting the magnitude of the damage done to the region's economic output, not to mention social and cultural life.³⁴

This violence arose from, and was shaped by, the stereotypes of a 'Wild East', characterized by thick forests, murky swamps, and savage peoples closer to animals than human beings. A centrifugal dynamic emerged over the course of the occupation, as expectations of local behaviour called for the ruthless and pre-emptive application of punishment. These efforts in turn created physical conditions and civilian responses which then radicalized these perceptions, encouraging brutal new initiatives, whose scope constantly broadened, drawing in ever greater numbers of victims. Key elements in this process, and much overlooked, were the methods of execution and the treatment of the bodies of the victims. Breaking their own taboos concerning the treatment of corpses, the German occupiers created a land of *Unkultur*, a self-inflicted failure which hindered their attempts to reorder the landscape and bend its people to their colonial vision.

Notes

- 1 Generalkommissariat Weissruthenia was the German administrative designation for the area of what is now Belarus. Between 1941 and 1944 it was part of the larger Reichskommissariat Ostland, which encompassed the present-day Baltic states, in addition to Weissruthenia.
- 2 United States Holocaust Memorial Archive (USHMMA), RG 22.001, Fiche 3, Folder 21.1.
- 3 Ibid.

- 4 A. Confino, 'Fantasies about the Jews: cultural reflections on the Holocaust', *History and Memory*, special issue, *Histories and Memories of Twentieth Century Germany*, 17:1–2 (spring–winter 2005), 296–322, at pp. 301–2.
- 5 V. G. Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 79, 137, 178. For an excellent discussion of such fantasies inside Germany during the inter-war period, see A. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914–1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).
- 6 Quoted in C. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weissrussland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2000), pp. 874–5; H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's Table Talk: 1941–1944, His Private Conversations* (New York: Enigma Books, 2000), p. 621.
- 7 USHMMA, RG 14.015, Fiche 1671.5; T. Taylor, *International Military Tribunals, Case 11, 1948* (Nuremberg: Office of the Military Government, Germany, 1948), pp. 5, 19, 23; P. Lieb, 'A precursor of modern counter-insurgency operations? The German occupation of the Ukraine in 1918', in Alaric Searle (ed.), *Working Papers in Military and International History, No. 4* (Salford: University of Salford, 2007), pp. 2–32, at pp. 22, 25. On the Russian Civil War and its aftermath, see: P. Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); A. Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005); D. Pohl, *Die Heerschaft der Wehrmacht: Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1944* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008).
- 8 Quoted in D. W. Oetting, *Kein Krieg wie im Westen: Wehrmacht und Sowjetarmee im Russland Krieg, 1941–1945* (Bonn: Osning Verlag, 2009), p. 54.
- 9 B. Musial, *Sowjetische Partisanen: Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), pp. 45–6, 55.
- 10 B. Waitmann, 'Calculus of complicity: the Wehrmacht, the anti-partisan war, and the Final Solution in White Russia, 1941–1942', *Central European History*, 44 (2011), 308–37, at pp. 318–24.
- 11 'The partisan's oath', USHMMA, RG 18.002, Reel 11, Fond R 83, Opis 1, Folder 122.7; RG 15.129, File 4379, 4–25.
- 12 USHMMA, RG 14.015, Fiche 2175.2; National Archives (NARA), T 175, Reel 74.2591694.
- 13 See J. Gumz, 'Wehrmacht perceptions of mass violence in Croatia, 1941–1942', *Historical Journal*, 44:4 (2001), 1015–38, at pp. 1028, 1032.
- 14 USHMMA, RG 18.001, Reel 8, Fond R 82, Opis 1, Folder 9, 2.
- 15 USHMMA, RG 53, Reel 11, Fond 370, Opis 1, Folder 386A.51; RG 53, Reel 5, Fond 655, Opis 1, File 3.2–3, 8, 60; RG 18.002, Reel 2, Fond R69, Opis 1A, Folder 6, 114. See also Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

- 16 P. Blood, *Hitler's Bandit Hunters: The SS and the Nazi Occupation of Europe* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2007), pp. 77–9; NARA, T175, Reel 140.2663246.
- 17 USHMMA, RG 14.015, Fiche 1671/3. 121; Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 884–5, 909.
- 18 USHMMA, RG 18.001, Reel 11, Fond R 83, Opis 1, Folder 122, 14–15; Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 889–90.
- 19 USHMMA, RG 18.001, Reel 8, Fond R 82, Opis 1, Folder 6.51, 72, 81.
- 20 USHMMA, RG 14.015.81, Fiche 3922.
- 21 USHMMA, RG 14.068, Box 29, Fiche 391.35.
- 22 USHMMA, RG 18.002, Reel 8, Fond R 82, Opis 1, Folder 6.4–6; RG 14.068, Box 29, Fiche 391, 101, Fiche 395.258.
- 23 USHMMA, RG 14.068, Box 29, Fiche 396; A. Adamovitch, Y. Bryl & V. Kolesnik, *Out of the Fire* (Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1980), p. 247; R. Wiegman, 'The anatomy of lynching', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 3:3 (January 1993), 445–67, at p. 446; USHMMA, RG 18.001, Reel 8, Fond R 82, Opis 1, Folder 9.63–4, Folder 10.15.
- 24 Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, pp. 42–5; Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, p. 166; USHMMA, RG 18.001, Reel 8, Fond R 82, Opis 7.25.
- 25 USHMMA, RG 14.068, Box 29, Fiche 396.28; Adamovitch *et al.*, *Out of the Fire*, pp. 96, 123, 132, 196.
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