Understanding Perpetrator Motivation

BABI YAR MASSACRE (29-30 SEP 1941)
Why did the men of the Uniformed Police participate as “willing executioners” in pursuit of the racial policies of the Third Reich?

Why do “ordinary men” become involved in mass murder?
Stanley Milgram-Shock Experiments (1961)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOYLCy5PVgM
Philip Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Study (1971)

COOL HAND LUKE (1967)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76OlwYmpXbc
Explaining Nazi Perpetrator Motivation

- Christopher Browning (1992)
  - “Ordinary Men”
  - Focus on peer group pressure, deference to authority, and instrumental factors

- Daniel Goldhagen (1996)
  - “Eliminationist anti-Semitism”
  - Focus on a pre-existing macro-cultural predisposition to annihilatory practice

- Claudia Koonz (2003)
  - The “Nazi Conscience”
  - Secular ethos extended to select community of ‘Aryan’ brethren
Explaining Nazi Perpetrator Motivation

• James Waller (2007)
  • *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*
  • Focus on situational (external influences) and dispositional (internal influences) that lead “ordinary people” to commit mass murder
  • Comparison of genocide & atrocity in the Holocaust, Cambodia, Guatemala, & the Balkans

• Harald Welzer (2005)
  • *Täter: Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden.*
  • “social restructuring”
  • Focus on the identification of the Jews as the “other” or “out group” that furnishes Aryan Germans with necessary justification for a process of incremental radicalization
Organizational Culture

Definition—“basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic ‘taken for granted’ fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment.”

Role of Leadership

Use of Symbols and Language

*Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership (Jossey-Bass, 1985)
The Role of Ideology

• Definition: “A manner of the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture.”

• Interrelationship of Ideology and Org. Culture

• The National Socialist Message to the Police: Portrays the German people locked in an apocalyptic battle against Judaism and Bolshevism and glorifies the martial identity and the concept of the political soldier
Notional Depiction of Police Behavior

- Protect and Serve
- Intimidation
- Physical Abuse

Limits of Acceptable Behavior
Police Behavior in the Third Reich

- Protect and Serve
- Intimidation
- Physical Abuse
- Murder

Limits of Acceptable Behavior
The Nazi Conception of Crime

Under National Socialism the definition of crime expands to include *any act, either political or criminal, injuring or weakening the social and political fabric of the constructed ‘Aryan’ community.*

Metaphorically this leads to the equation of alternate political philosophies or other races with terms such as “disease,” “germs,” “plague,” or “parasite.”
A New Image of the Police

- The message
  - “Friend and Helper” and “The good uncle Schupo”
  - The “political soldier”
- The media
  - Radio, Newsprint, Books, Posters
- The mechanisms
  - The Winter Welfare Drive
  - The Day of the German Police
  - The Use of Ceremony
  - Sporting Competitions and Physical Fitness
  - Military and Ideological Training
The Twin Pillars of Police Culture

- **Militarization of the Police**
  - Hierarchical structure
  - Concept of military duty and absolute obedience tied to higher purpose
  - Vision of apocalyptic struggle

- **Merging of the Police with the SS**
  - The SS as “Party Soldiers”
  - Symbolic union of the NS Movement with the Police
  - Physical and psychological aspects of merger promote shared “corporate mindset”
Building a Martial Identity

• **Historical Predisposition**
  - Accession of ex-military officers & NCOs
  - Freikorps association

• **Symbols**
  - Glorification of the Prussian Model
  - Military salute between police and Wehrmacht (1933)
  - Standardized police uniform
  - Introduction of the police sword and bayonet
  - Authorization to wear military badges & decorations

• **Organizational Measures**
  - Transfer of military conscripts into Police
  - Himmler orders training on “military foundation” (1936)
  - Creation of the Police Battalions
  - Equipping the Police
Instilling the SS Ethic

• **The SS “virtues”**
  - Loyalty, obedience, bravery, truthfulness, honesty, fellowship, acceptance of responsibility, industry, and abstinence

• **Symbols**
  - Introduction of “German Salute” and Hitler Oath (1934)
  - “Blood Banner” Ceremony (Nuremberg Party Rally, 1937)
  - Introduction of SS runes and SS-Police Sword (1937, 1938)
  - SS rank for policemen in the SS

• **Organizational Measures**
  - Accession of SS and SA into the police (1933)
  - Appointment of Himmler (1936)
  - Graduates of SS-Junkerschulen into the Uniformed Police
  - Creation of the Higher SS and Police Leaders (1937)
  - Transfer of ideological indoctrination to SS Training Office (1938)
  - Creation of the SS Police Division (1939)
Promoting the Ideal
Pre-War Image of the Police
Pre-War Image of the Police
Pre-War Image of the Police
Pre-War Image of the Police
Pre-War Image of the Police
Pre-War Image of the Police
The Use of Ceremony
Linking Police and Party “Martyrs” in the Battles against the Left

Wreath Laying by Himmler at the Horst Wessel Square in Berlin, January 1937
Associating the Police with the Martyrs of the Movement

Police Parade in front of the Feldherrnhalle in Munich, Aug 1938
Taking the Oath to Hitler

The Heldenplatz in Vienna, March 17, 1938
Wartime Image of the Police
Wartime Image of the Police
From Theory to Reality
Wartime Image of the Police
The Shadow War- War Against the Partisans

• Waffen-SS and Police forces combine in “anti-partisan” war
  • From 27 Jul – 27 Aug 1941, SS forces murder at least 1,294 and police battalions kill 4,905 persons (94% of whom are Jews)

• Ultimately, German police forces murder over 500,000 men, women, and children while the notorious Einsatzgruppen murder over another 1,000,000 Russian Jews alone
The Paperwork of Annihilation
Berichte über abgebrannte Dörfer während der Aktionen gegen Banditen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dorf</th>
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<td>Zahl</td>
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Summa 317 1419 185,3 1466,8 434,8 105,2

Saslawl, den 4.6.1943.

Leiter der Landabteilung / Zealonok /
EUPHEMISM AND CHOICE

a) Bandits
b) Beggars
c) Asocials
d) Jews (Work shy, epidemic danger)

a) Prisoners of War
b) Beggars
c) Thieves
d) Politically Suspect
e) Black Marketeers
f) Vagrants
**EUPHEMISM AND CHOICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Bandits</th>
<th>b) Beggars</th>
<th>c) Mentally Ill</th>
<th>d) Jews (Vagrants)</th>
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<th>e) “Bandit” Helpers</th>
<th>f) Work Shy</th>
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<th>In der Zeit vom 16. mit 22. August 1942 wurden befehlsgemäß behandelt:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Banditen</td>
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<td>b) Bettler</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Geisteckrunk</td>
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<td>d) Juden (Inmehreiherei)</td>
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<td>zusammen:</td>
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<td>b) Helfershelfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Geisteckrunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Juden</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) Zigeuner</td>
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<td>f) Arbeitsehe</td>
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<th>An Sipo, Sokal übergeben:</th>
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<th>An Arbeitamt, Rawa Ruska überstellt:</th>
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<th>An Gend.-Zug, Rawa Ruska überstellt:</th>
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<td>2 (Ernteeinbruch)</td>
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<th>6.</th>
<th>Entlassungen:</th>
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The Face of Annihilation