

**Jewish Persecution in the Soviet-German War of 1941-1945:
Stalin, Hitler, and a Comparison of the Atrocities Inflicted by Both on the
Eastern Front**

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Introduction

Following the sneak attack against the Soviet Union by Hitler and the Nazis in June of 1941, Stalin and the Red Army threw their lot in with the Allies. After finally turning the tide of battle and pushing the Germans back across the map of Europe, they came to be viewed as having liberated areas previously occupied by the Nazis, which indeed they did, at least in the physical sense of the term. The Soviets, however, were far from “liberators” during their days of wine and roses with Hitler and the German Army. In fact, while the Nazis were killing Polish intellectuals and terrorizing Jews on their side of the Molotov-Ribbentrop line, the Soviets were busy exercising their own brand of barbarism in their eastern sphere of Poland. That barbarism, however, extended far beyond the boundaries of Poland, and it did not end simply because the Soviets joined the Allies. Rather, as the Red Army reclaimed their own territory from the Nazis, and then went on to occupy new territories as well, they encountered a number of civilian populations that had been living under Nazi brutality and were eagerly awaiting their liberation. Many of those populations had those hopes dashed by the Soviets.

This paper deals with the push-back against the Nazis by Stalin and the Red Army, and examines, to the greatest extent possible given Soviet secrecy, their treatment of European Jews and other citizens during their acquisition of European territory previously occupied by the Nazis following the invasion of Poland and Operation Barbarossa, in an effort to determine if those Jewish citizens were treated any differently by the Soviets than were other civilian populations, and, if so, why. The mass murder of Jews that has come to define the Holocaust largely took place outside

of Germany. Specifically, those atrocities took place primarily in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and the Soviet Union.¹ Thus, the body of work that follows, quite naturally, details with the treatment of Jews and other civilian populations by the Nazis as they invaded and occupied those areas, and then covers that same ground a second time in order to detail the behavior of the Red Army toward those same groups as it “liberated” areas previously victimized by the Nazis. Poland is an exception, and is examined first and somewhat differently, as it was occupied by both the Nazis and the Soviets at the same time prior to Operation Barbarossa. The paper traces the Nazi occupations that took place in the areas that have already been specified, and then covers the Soviet occupation or reacquisition that took place in these same regions subsequent to the Red Army’s successful counteroffensives. This strategy requires coverage, in varying degrees, of areas such as Soviet Ukraine and south-eastern Poland, as well as Romania, Bulgaria, and northern Yugoslavia.² How many civilian populations, Jews and otherwise, were still intact by the time the Red Army arrived? How many remained who were victimized by the Soviets?

Any victimization of Jews and/or other populations at the hands of the Soviets unearthed in this paper is analyzed against five possible hypotheses: 1) Stalin, motivated by antisemitism, initiated a top-down system of persecution against the Jews of Eastern Europe that was equally as brutal as the system implemented by Hitler and the Nazis. 2) Stalin, motivated by imperialism and territorial expansion, initiated a top-down system of violence and murder against a number of Eastern European citizens,

¹ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. (New York: Basic Books, 2010), viii.

² Christopher Duffy, *Red Storm On The Reich: The Soviet March On Germany, 1945*. (London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1991) 11-12.

and Jews were not treated with any more or less brutality than any other demographic.

3) The Red Army, motivated by antisemitism, and left largely unchecked in large and defenseless territories, initiated a low-level system of persecution against the Jews of Eastern Europe that was equally as brutal as the system implemented by Hitler and the Nazis.

4) The Red Army, left largely unchecked in large and defenseless territories, initiated a low-level system of persecution against a number of Eastern European citizens, and Jews were not treated with any more or less brutality than any other demographic.

5) The violence against Jews and other citizens in Eastern Europe was haphazard, and was not controlled or condoned by either Stalin at the top or officers in the Red Army at a lower level. The evidence collected during the research process provides validation for several of these hypotheses and refutes others. The various hypotheses are tested against statistical information related to aggregate death tolls in the territories in question, legal records, and evidence of written and/or verbal orders, issued at various levels of authority, that share a cause and effect relationship with these death tolls. Finally, the evidence will demonstrate that Soviet violence varied by region, and often was directed at potential regime opponents, often anti-Communists, and included Jewish opponents.

Soviet Retaliation

To fully comprehend the similarities and differences between Nazi and Soviet behavior toward European Jews and other civilian populations, there must first be an understanding of the territorial acquisitions gained by the Nazis during Operation Barbarossa, as well as of the atrocities they went on to commit in those areas; then

there must also be an understanding of the chronology in which the Soviets reclaimed those territories, and then went on to claim other territory previously occupied by the Nazis, territory that had not been part of the Soviet Union prior to the war. Only once that point has been reached can one begin to analyze the behavior of the Red Army toward the populations that it encountered, and to compare that behavior with that of the Nazis.

Hitler's surprise attack on the Soviet Union took place on June 22, 1941. The operation involved approximately three million German troops in coordinated attacks upon the Baltics, Ukraine, and Belarus. The goal of the Nazi attack was the acquisition of Leningrad, Moscow, and the Caucasus.³ Hitler had convinced himself that such a conquest was possible, and that it could be achieved within two or three months.⁴ Within two weeks of the initial attacks, Germany had taken possession of not only eastern Poland, which had previously belonged to the Soviets by virtue of the Treaty On Borders And Friendship, but also of Latvia, the majority of Belarus and Ukraine, and Lithuania, which had been given to the Soviets when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line was redrawn and the Germans had claimed Warsaw for themselves. Approximately two months after their betrayal of the Soviets, the Nazis had gained the remainder of Belarus, almost all of Ukraine, and Estonia.⁵ The Soviets, however, did not collapse, and their government remained in Moscow rather than in exile. The German offensive stalled by 1942, and the siege of Leningrad ended in stalemate. Afterwards, the Nazis made no further progress toward Moscow and failed to capture Stalingrad.

³ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 165.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

In June of 1944, during “Operation Bagration,” the Soviets launched a counter-offensive in Belarus. Not only was this operation successful in terms of its short-term goals, but it cleared the way for the Soviets to reclaim their earlier portion of eastern Poland, and then to push through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line, with the Nazis by then well on the run. The rest of the timeline is less important for the purposes of this paper. For the sake of inclusion, however, once the Red Army crossed the previous division between Nazi and Soviet-occupied Poland, they discovered, in order, the facilities at Majdanek and Treblinka, the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and then pushed on toward Berlin.⁶ Parallel offensives against the Nazis took place in other regions, however, allowing the Soviets to reclaim areas such as Ukraine and south-eastern Poland, and to gain control of Romania, the eastern Carpathians, the lower Danube, Bulgaria, the Balkans, Belgrade, and northern Yugoslavia.⁷ It is to each of those regions that this paper now turns its attention, first working backwards to the time of pre-Barbarossa Nazi occupation, and then jumping forward to the period of Soviet acquisition and/or reclamation.

Poland

Working chronologically through Nazi-occupied territory (not including Czechoslovakia and Austria, which were occupied without the use of military force) one arrives first in Poland. In order to compare the atrocities committed against Jews and other civilian populations by the Nazis with those perpetrated by the Soviets, a careful study of the way in which Poland was conquered and then divided is necessary, as its

⁶ Ibid, 311.

⁷ Duffy, *Red Storm On The Reich*, 11-12.

story is somewhat different than that of other regions which will be discussed later.

When the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was being negotiated, one of the factors that made the agreement so desirable to Stalin was that, in return for the Soviet Union's minimal assistance in invading Poland, they would then be entitled to occupy and control a portion of the country themselves. Thus, the tandem invasion of Poland by the Nazis and the Soviets left the country basically split into eastern and western spheres, with the so-called "Molotov-Ribbentrop Line" serving as the official demarcation. The Nazis controlled the portion of Poland west of the line, and the Soviets ruled in the east.⁸

Along with this partition, at least where the Nazis were concerned, came the first appearance of the Einsatzgruppen. While its origins and its composition are beyond the scope of this paper, the term itself translates roughly into English as "deployment groups" or "task forces." It became the job of the Einsatzgruppen to travel through the towns and villages that had been leveled by Germany's regular military, and to murder the educated and the accomplished who were among the survivors - a task that Hitler felt was necessary before total enslavement of the Polish people could proceed.⁹ These actions were not directed at Jews but at the general population of Poland. In Katowice, just as an example, 750 citizens were murdered in this fashion by the Einsatzgruppen. In Bydgoszcz, 900 members of the community's educated class were killed in the same manner. In total, these "task forces" slaughtered approximately 50,000 non-Jewish Poles before the war came to an end.¹⁰ With regard to crimes against the Jews of Poland themselves, the surprising truth of the matter is that, at least at this early stage,

⁸ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 126.

⁹ *Ibid*, 127.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

the focus seems to have been on creating a general sense of terror, one that would incentivize the Jews to flee east of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line and into Soviet territory. Any killing that took place during these acts of terror was simply a byproduct and not a result of the actual missions themselves.¹¹

It is of vital importance for one to understand that all of these crimes-those directed against the non-Jewish educated class in Poland, as well as those directed against Polish Jews, took place during the very earliest days following the invasion. By September 28, just 27 days after the invasion began, the Nazis and the Soviets had signed the Treaty On Borders And Friendship. The new agreement made some changes to the original pact between the two countries, most of which turned out to be trivial in relation to the otherwise grand scheme of things. One change that was not trivial, however, was that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line was redrawn, and the Germans gained control of Warsaw.¹² Warsaw, along with Lublin, Radom, and Krakow, became part of an area in German-occupied Poland known as the "General Government." Never content to let grass grow beneath its feet, the Nazi government quickly took possession of its Polish neighbors to the east - a list that included West Prussia, Poznan, Upper Silesia, and Danzig. Those annexations took place in October of 1939, and they were the final Nazi acquisitions relative to Poland prior to the German sneak attack on the Soviet Union in 1941.¹³

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Invasion Of Poland, Fall 1939," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/invasion-of-poland-fall-1939>. Accessed 4/9/2020.

On the eve of the war, the small country of Poland was home to 3.35 million Jews. Before the war ended, three million of those individuals were dead.¹⁴ The first of those 3 million deaths were due to the conditions in the ghettos, or to the intentional killings that took place in those settings. One example is the Lodz Ghetto, which was established in February of 1940.¹⁵ Conditions in the Lodz Ghetto, as in all of the ghettos in varying degrees, were deplorable. People died from disease, hunger, exposure, and any number of other issues brought about by overcrowding and lack of sanitation.¹⁶ Those numbers, however, have yet to be aggregated, if ever such a task is undertaken. What is known is that between 1940 and 1944, the Nazis shot approximately 43,000 of the Jews living in the Lodz Ghetto. Others were executed during public hangings, but that number is less well-documented. Between 1942 and 1944, approximately 143,000-145,000 of the Jews living in the Lodz Ghetto were deported to death camps, primarily the killing center in Chelmno. When it was liberated by the Soviets in 1944, the Lodz Ghetto contained only 877 remaining Jews.¹⁷ In the Warsaw Ghetto, established in November of 1940, at least 300,000 Jews were either shot or gassed. Another 92,000 died from the conditions within the ghetto itself, which have already been described relative to Lodz, or they were killed within the walls of the ghetto during military altercations.¹⁸

¹⁴ "Jewish Losses During The Holocaust: By Country," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-losses-during-the-holocaust-by-country>. Accessed 4/9/2020.

¹⁵ Susan D. Glazer, "Ghettos Under The Nazis-My Jewish Learning." *Judaism & Jewish Life-My Jewish Learning*. My Jewish Learning. 06 Feb. 2012 http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Modern_History/1914-1918/The_Holocaust/War/Ghettos.shtml. Accessed 4/9/2020.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Lodz Ghetto Deportations and Statistics." Edited by Shirley Rotbein Flaum. *Lodz Ghetto Deportations and Statistics*, Lodz KehilaLinks, Kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/lodz/statistics.htm. Accessed 4/9/2020.

¹⁸ Glazer, "Ghettos Under The Nazis."

The Soviet government, not to be outdone on their side of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line, issued a directive on December 4, 1939 stating that all Polish citizens on its side of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line who demonstrated a “danger to the new order” would be first collected and then expelled from Poland. Again, it is not clear how the Soviet leadership determined who was and who was not a danger, but some of the target groups that were caught within this new directive included policemen, foresters, civil servants, military veterans, and the family members of those within said groups. Regardless of the aggregated data relative to these individual groups, this nebulous Soviet system of classification created a scenario in which Polish Jews could find themselves either more or less severely persecuted, depending on how antisemitic the authorities in their particular regions were. The action took place in February of 1940, just two months after the directive was first issued. Included were 139,794 Polish citizens, all of whom were rounded up at gunpoint and sent to either Siberia or Kazakhstan for forced labor in the Gulags. Of that original number, a total of approximately 5,000 people perished during transport.¹⁹

Another example of Soviet atrocity against Polish citizens can be found in the Katyn Forest Massacre. While less known to history than similar events such as the mass killings at Babi Yar, the Katyn Forest Massacre is no less significant. First proposed by Lavrenty Beria, a Georgian Soviet NKVD police chief who served under Stalin, and formally approved by the Soviet Politburo on March 5, 1940, the massacre saw the mass execution of 14,700 Polish prisoners of war. The entire operation took approximately three months, beginning with the evacuation of prisoners from camps in

¹⁹ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 128-129.

Starobelsk, Kozelsk, and Ostashkov, proceeding through the transportation of those prisoners to the actual killing sites, and culminating in the murders themselves. The entire event had been completed by May of 1940. The Katyn Forest, for which the massacre is named, is one of the burial sites.²⁰ Overall, by the time that Operation Barbarossa took place, some 315,000 Poles had suffered deportation at the hands of the Soviets. Another 110,000 had been arrested, and 30,000 had been executed. Records indicate that another 25,000 died while in custody.²¹ These war crimes, committed by the Soviets against Poles on the eastern side of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Line, became even more problematic after the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union. When that attack took place, the Poles and the Soviets became allies against Hitler and the German Army. Efforts on the part of the Red Army to form a fighting force of unified Polish and Soviet soldiers were complicated by Polish memories of the brutalities that were endured under Soviet occupation.

Preparation for Operation Barbarossa did not slow the progress of Nazi brutality in Poland. During the time period leading up to its attack on the Soviets, the Nazis perpetrated a number of crimes against non-Jewish citizens living within the new General Government, now under the administration of Hans Frank. Under the AB Aktion Program (which stood for *Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion*, Extraordinary Pacification Action), all citizens deemed to be a threat to the government were executed. This operation took place over an extended period of time and targeted such groups as “common criminals,” the clergy, political activists, and those with more

²⁰ Claudia Weber, “The Export of Terror-On the Impact of the Stalinist Culture of Terror on Soviet Foreign Policy During and After World War II,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 11, 2-3 (2009): 285-306.

²¹ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 151.

education. Some of these individuals were already in custody, but many others were arrested without just cause, simply so that they could be executed. By the end of the summer of 1940, approximately 3,000 people had been shot under this program.²²

Moving Beyond Poland

Before proceeding any further, a brief discussion of evidence versus allegation is necessary, at least as it relates to the atrocities that Hitler and Stalin are each responsible for. It is often said that the crimes which can be attributed to the two men are equal. In fact, it is not uncommon for people to make the bold claim that Stalin's hands are even bloodier than Hitler's. Those types of accusations provided the impetus for this body of work to begin with. During their respective terms in power, both dictators were responsible for the murders of millions of people, Jews and otherwise, and history provides both statistical and anecdotal evidence to substantiate that guilt, as well as personal narratives.²³ Thus, the accusations that equate Hitler and Stalin sometimes seem legitimate on the surface. The degree to which those charges have credence with regard to WWII in general, or to the Holocaust more specifically, is another matter, and one that requires a certain numerical and statistical analysis. Some of the most important of those statistics are as follows:

- When the Jewish losses during the Holocaust by country are totaled, the number is a staggering 6,844,040 lives.²⁴

²² Ibid, 147.

²³ "How Many People Did Stalin Kill?" History of Russia. <http://www.historyofrussia.org/stalin-killed-how-many-people>. Accessed May 5, 2020.

²⁴ "Jewish Losses During The Holocaust: By Country"

- The total number of Soviet Jews murdered during the Holocaust is estimated to be approximately 1.5 million.²⁵
- The vast majority of European Jews murdered throughout the entire war were murdered in countries other than Germany, and after Operation Barbarossa, the German Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.
- Thus, it was the invasion of Soviet territory by the Nazis, and the subsequent occupation of those territories, as well as other adjacent lands, that created the opportunity for Hitler and his henchmen to murder most of the 6,844,040 Jews who perished in total.
- The main countries in question, those which were either conquered by the Nazis and the Soviets as part of their 1939 pact, or those which were in contest between the two juggernauts after Barbarossa, include 1) Poland, 2) Lithuania, 3) Romania, 4) Yugoslavia, 5) Latvia, 6) Bulgaria, and 7) the Soviet Union. In terms of the Soviet Union, most of the numbers in question, at least for the purposes of this paper, relate to Soviet Ukraine and the Baltic countries, which accounted for 900,000 Soviet Jewish deaths, and 228,000 Soviet Jewish deaths, respectively.²⁶
- Many of the territories in question were under Soviet control prior to Operation Barbarossa. Thus, when the Red Army re-entered those areas after turning the tide of battle against the Nazis, they were *re-acquiring* previously held territory, not conquering new regions. In other cases, the reverse is true. This is of vital importance, as it helps to explain the presence or absence of Soviet violence against Jews and others during the period of Soviet push back.

²⁵ Lucy S. Dawidowicz. *The Holocaust And The Historians*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981. 80.

²⁶ Ibid.

It is also helpful to keep in mind those statements which can be proven and those which are anecdotal. It is one thing for historians such as Lucy S. Dawidowicz to claim that antisemitism was so prevalent in the Soviet Union that, following Operation Barbarossa, countless non-Jewish Soviet citizens joined with the Nazi Einsatzgruppen in their persecution of Soviet Jews.²⁷ It is also fine for her to point to the absence of criticism for Nazi antisemitism and/or persecution of the Jews from Soviet anti-Nazi propaganda prior to the 1939 pact, and to interpret this absence as evidence for antisemitism “at the highest levels of Soviet bureaucracy” before the war.²⁸ Some caution is in order, however, as these statements are not adequate substitutes for facts. With this in mind, the remainder of this paper will adhere to those facts and not anecdotal evidence.

Some of the best factual material with regard to the ways in which European Jews and other civilian populations were treated by Stalin and the Red Army is found in the information compiled by Albert Kaganovitch in his article “Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities During World War II,” which was published in *Yad Vashem Studies* in 2010. The article is part of a larger research initiative titled “Jewish Refugees in the Eastern Parts of the Soviet Union during World War II,” and it deals with the Jews who were living in more western reaches of the Soviet Union, and who fled, along with other populations, to the far eastern portions of the country after the Nazi invasion. That includes those territories that the Soviets had claimed as part of their previous pact with Hitler. Its main area of focus concerns the relationships that existed between the Jews

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 81.

and other populations and the Soviet authorities operating in the lands to which they fled.

In terms of the Jews who fled, Kapanovitch makes it clear that three distinct classifications are involved. These include the Jews who were already citizens of the Soviet Union before the Nazi/Soviet invasion of Poland, Jews inherited by the Soviets when Stalin annexed their territories as spoils of their 1939 pact with the Nazis, and Jews who had escaped from German to Soviet territory between 1939 and the Nazi sneak attack in 1941. While the quality of life for mainstream Soviet citizens before, during, and after WWII is certainly a matter for debate, the Soviet Union did something surprising with regard to the Jews and other populations who fled further east. They recognized their status as refugees, and they extended to them the same basic rights that all Soviet citizens enjoyed, at least ostensibly. Those rights and privileges included free medical care, free schooling, work permits, and food rations. Kapanovitch also notes that “[a]s a rule, the Soviet establishment provided trains for the transport of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from areas under threat when the trains could be spared.”²⁹ While these evacuees often received a cold welcome from local authorities, were often mistreated and taken advantage of, and often died as a result of forced labor, cold weather, and food shortages, there is little evidence to suggest that the Jewish refugees were treated any differently, in terms of broad Soviet policy, than were members of other demographics.³⁰

²⁹ Albert Kaganovitch. “Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities During World War II.” *Yad Vashem Studies* 38 (2) (2010): 85-121. 93.

³⁰ Ibid.

What was present, however, was the potential for the singling out of Jews based on the degree to which individual local authorities were antisemitic. While there was no open Soviet policy of antisemitism, and archival sources contain few references to this type of behavior, there are some examples of antisemitism from local officials. Kapanovitch provides entries from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Prosecutor's Report for the first four months of 1942, showing that three local officials were charged in separate incidents with "committing antisemitic acts against refugees and making antisemitic remarks."³¹ There are similar reports from Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, and Uzbekistan that discuss local officials being charged with related offenses during that same year.³² The important thing is that the Soviet government found them each guilty and sentenced them. There was no proverbial slap on the wrist, and the officials in question were not acquitted, which would have indicated to some degree that the Soviet Union condoned such treatment of Jews. Throughout that same year, there were some claims by refugees that their requests for things such as better housing were ignored or vetoed due to the fact that they were Jewish, or that they were given more severe work assignments for the same reason. These claims were investigated as well, but they were (and still are) much more difficult to confirm or refute, and the degree to which convictions occurred is less well documented.³³ What matters is that they were not part of a state-sponsored approach to European Jews. In fact, Kapanovitch states:

Antisemitic actions or remarks were [sic] viewed by the central authorities as manifestations of disloyalty to the regime, if only because the belief was widespread among the masses that the Jews had infiltrated the administration of the country and high officials knew it. This was indicated by the fact that manifestations of antisemitism were recorded in official

³¹ Ibid, 118.

³² Ibid, 119.

³³ Ibid, 118-119.

reports under the rubric of anti-Soviet attitudes. Therefore, the central authorities fought against grassroots antisemitism, including by local officials, despite the fact that some high officials themselves were prejudiced against Jews [sic].³⁴

Kapanovitch is citing, among other things, reports concerning Moscow and Anders' Polish Army in the USSR. One could, of course, argue that the Soviets created these legal records fraudulently in order to make their treatment of European Jews look better through the lens of history than it was in reality. If their intent was to whitewash, however, then it would have been far smarter on their part to avoid documenting anything at all. Surely the absence of any antisemitism from the historical record would have been just as effective as phony examples of antisemitism being appropriately dealt with. Thus, the legal documents must, for now at least, be taken at face value. They do not, fortunately for the purposes of this paper, stand alone. Rather, there is a glut of statistical information related to the Soviet occupations that characterized the last few years of the war, and those numbers cast further doubt on the notion that Soviet and Nazi atrocities during the war years were comparable.

The best place to begin is in Soviet Ukraine, which the Nazis invaded in June of 1941. By November of that same year, the entire country was under their control.³⁵ At the time, there were an estimated 30 million Jews living in Soviet Ukraine.³⁶ Once the Nazis had secured the territory in the fall of 1941, they began a systematic slaughter of Jews which did not end until Soviet reoccupation.³⁷ After the Soviets finally prevailed at the Battle of Stalingrad in the first few months of 1943, a path was cleared for them to

³⁴ Ibid, 119.

³⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica. "Ukraine-The Nazi Occupation Of Soviet Ukraine". www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine-The-Nazi-Occupation-Of-Soviet-Ukraine. Accessed 4/27/2020.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

eventually reclaim Ukraine, which was accomplished in October of 1943. By the time that occurred, however, approximately 900,000-1.5 million Jews had perished, either by direct methods or as the result of the harsh conditions created by the Nazis.³⁸ It is estimated that as many as 7 million citizens of Soviet Ukraine were killed in WWII in total.³⁹ There are no archival or anecdotal records of Soviet mistreatment of Ukrainian Jews after the Red Army had reoccupied the area. This does not, in and of itself, prove that antisemitism was not a factor in the mentality of either Stalin or those under his command. It is, instead, explained by a very simple factor. That is that the area had belonged to the Soviets until just a few short years earlier, and most of the civilian population - Jews and otherwise - that the Nazis had terrorized since 1941 were Soviet citizens of Ukraine. Whatever percentage of that original civilian population remained when the Soviets returned simply became Soviet citizens once again. Their citizenship was not always a guarantee of protection, as many citizens were jailed and/or sent to forced labor due to Stalin's fear that portions of the population had been "turned" during Nazi occupation and were now a threat to the Soviet system as a result. There is still copious research that remains to be conducted with regard to these occurrences. Regardless, the Soviet reoccupation of Ukraine appears to have been a welcome one for the remaining civilian population.

The next country that must be considered is that of Romania. Unlike Soviet Ukraine, which had been under Soviet control prior to Operation Barbarossa, Romania actually participated in the Nazi sneak attack against the Red Army, and all too willingly at that. Romanian authorities had been aggressive and persecutorial toward their own

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

Jewish population for some time, so the Nazi invasion was really just a cover for them to launch pogroms and large-scale shootings in their own backyard, under the guise of military activity.⁴⁰ During the pogrom that took place in tandem with the initial Nazi invasion, it is estimated that 4,000 Jews were killed. The number of Jews who were deported is believed to have been in the thousands. The Nazis did not have to do much work on their own when it came to Romania, as the country's power structure was eager to throw its lot in with Hitler and his cause. For its assistance during the initial stages of Operation Barbarossa, Romania was gifted additional territories. These included Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and the land between the Dniester and Bug Rivers, which was known as "Transnistria."⁴¹ In these territories, the Romanians began their own systematic murder of the Jewish population. Those who were not killed outright were placed in ghettos, forced into labor, died in transit, or were murdered whenever they arrived at the various destinations to which they were sent.⁴² Romania's pre-war Jewish population was 1,070,000. Of that population, some 480,000 were murdered during the Holocaust.⁴³

Like Romania, Bulgaria also assisted the Nazis during their invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, primarily with regard to the occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece. After these initial stages had been completed, however, Bulgaria declined participation in the full-scale war against the Soviets. In yet another similarity to Romania, persecution of the Bulgarian Jewish population had been taking place since before the Nazi attack

⁴⁰ "Romania," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Romania>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Jewish Losses During The Holocaust: By Country"

against the Soviets. Beginning in July of 1940, Bulgarian Jews had been forced to endure a series of restrictive laws, as well as increasingly frequent deportations, the total number of which is estimated to be approximately 11,000.⁴⁴ At first glance, this fate might seem preferable to that of the many Jews who were murdered elsewhere. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these 11,000 deportations were to Treblinka, where almost all of them were eventually murdered.⁴⁵ When the Soviets began to turn the tables on the Nazis, Bulgaria made peace with Stalin and the Red Army and subsequently went to war against Hitler. That took place in 1944, and statistics from 1945 show that, with the exception of the approximately 11,000 Jews who were deported during the war, Bulgaria's Jewish population was still near the 50,000 mark that had been assessed before the Holocaust. Here the numbers work in the opposite direction in comparison with previous examples. Rather than finding a nearly obliterated Jewish population upon occupation, the Soviets instead found Bulgaria's Jews relatively intact.⁴⁶ The fact that pre-war and post-war population estimates are roughly the same is the best indication available to history that Stalin and the Red Army did not target Bulgaria's Jews for extinction following reoccupation. The extent to which that population may have been mistreated and marginalized, but still allowed to live, cannot be ascertained.

As mentioned earlier, the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia and Greece as part of Operation Barbarossa, and they were aided by Bulgaria during this particular phase of their offensive. Yugoslavia's experience during the Holocaust is more complicated than

⁴⁴ "Bulgaria," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Bulgaria>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

that of other countries. Initially, the country cooperated with Hitler and the Nazis and agreed to allow the German Army to utilize its terrain as a way to access Greece. The Nazis only invaded Yugoslavia after this offer was recanted.⁴⁷ Yugoslavia's army was no match for the Germans, and the country was soon divided into four spheres of influence. Hungary and Bulgaria, in return for their complicity, were each given portions of Yugoslavia, and the "Independent State of Croatia" was created, which was still ruled by Germany and Italy, who carved up the rest of the country between themselves.⁴⁸ Yugoslavia, as a whole, had a pre-war Jewish population of approximately 203,500. Under that umbrella, one must analyze the killing of Jews separately as it relates to the areas of Serbia and Croatia.

Serbia was one of the regions in Yugoslavia that the Germans took for themselves. The initial invasion of Yugoslavia took place in April of 1941. Late that same summer, there was a relatively short-lived uprising against the Nazis in Serbia and Bosnia. The battle cry that the Nazis put out in retaliation was "For every German killed, 100 Serbs or Jews would be shot." Thus, the Nazis launched a campaign of murder against the Jews and Roma living in Serbia that lasted through the fall of 1941 and resulted in the destruction of practically the entire population of Jewish men, approximately 8,000 people, most of them murdered in detention camps.⁴⁹ In addition, approximately 1,000 Roma lost their lives, and 6,280 women and children were sent to the camp at Semlin, where they were all killed in gas vans during the spring and summer of 1942, by which time almost the entire Jewish population of Serbia had been

⁴⁷ "Yugoslavia," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Yugoslavia>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

wiped off the face of the earth.⁵⁰ Again, the numbers show that there was simply no Jewish population left in Serbia for the Soviets to victimize after they occupied the territory later in the war.

In Croatia, as was the case in Romania, the Nazis could count on plenty of assistance from the locals. Nominally, Croatia was independent, as per the post-invasion division of Yugoslavia into quadrants. In reality, as indicated previously, the Germans and Italians retained control. All that was really necessary, however, was to let the Croatian authorities have their way.⁵¹ Croatia's pre-war Jewish population was approximately 32,000. By the end of 1941, nearly two-thirds of this population had been placed in camps. Between 12,000 and 20,000 Jews who had been sent to the Jasenovac camp were killed by the Ustasa, militant Croatian fascists who did the bidding of the Nazis. In addition, some 7,000 Jews were given into the hands of the Nazis during 1942 and 1943, and were then sent to their deaths at Auschwitz. The Jews were not the only victims, however, as nearly the whole population of Roma that comprised Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina was murdered by the Croatian government, a total of 25,000 people. Faced with the oncoming Red Army in the fall of 1944, the Nazis fled Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, although the fighting in Croatia did not end until the spring of 1945. In the end, only a total of 14,000 Yugoslavian Jews survived the war.⁵² The vast majority of those 14,000 would have been from areas other than Serbia, since that Jewish population was almost completely destroyed. Not many would have been from Croatia either, since two-thirds of that Jewish population was sent to the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

camp, and most of those were subsequently murdered as well. That leaves those portions of Yugoslavia that were given to Hungary and Bulgaria as spoils. While these Jewish populations certainly could have been murdered by the Soviets when they finally conquered those areas, they were not. They experienced harsh conditions and harsh treatment in varying degrees, but they were not (in terms of an overall policy) killed. Thus, Stalin and the Red Army, however harsh they might have been, do not merit the same degree of war guilt as do the Nazis, at least where the Jews of Yugoslavia are concerned. Having said that, there is evidence that when the Red Army forced the Nazis to retreat from the area, the victory was followed by a period of intense violence directed against the civilian population in general. There were random executions, but the most common forms of mistreatment seem to have been theft and rape. Those numbers vary, however. For example, between 5,000 and 200,000 Hungarian women are reported to have been raped, depending on the source.⁵³

Prior to WWII, Lithuania boasted a total Jewish population of approximately 153,000.⁵⁴ The Soviets officially annexed Lithuania in 1940, and by the following year, so many European Jews had escaped from German to Soviet controlled territories that their numbers in Lithuania had risen to nearly 250,000.⁵⁵ This statistic is an indication that Soviet treatment of Jews had not sunk to the same level as that of the Nazis. After Operation Barbarossa, the Germans occupied Lithuania, as they had prior to Soviet

⁵³ Bessel, Richard; Dirk Schumann (2003). *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe*. Cambridge University Press. 132; Ungvarry, Krisztian (2005). *The Siege of Budapest*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 348-350; James, Mark (2005). "Remembering Rape: Divided Social Memory and the Red Army in Hungary 1944-1945". *Past & Present*. Oxford University Press. 188 (August 2005): 133-161.

⁵⁴ "Jewish Losses During The Holocaust: By Country"

⁵⁵ "Lithuania," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Lithuania>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

annexation, and began work on what would come to be one of the worst slaughters of the Holocaust. As in the case of Romania and Croatia, the Nazis had plenty of help from non-Jewish Lithuanians. Beginning in July of 1941, the Nazi Einsatzgruppen squads, along with the locals, initiated the mass murder, by shooting, of Lithuania's rural Jewish population. They then moved on to the cities and the ghettos. Only 40,000 Lithuanian Jews remained living following this initial killing spree. Of that number, approximately 5,000 were sent to the killing centers in Poland two years later. By the time the Soviets had retaken Lithuania in 1944, ninety percent of Lithuania's original Jewish population had been murdered.⁵⁶ Lithuania differs slightly from other countries caught in the path of Hitler and Stalin's respective armies, in that there is substantial evidence of Soviet mistreatment of Jews and other demographics during its first occupation by the Soviets, which took place during the years 1939 and 1940. At that time, the Soviets staged a phony election and subsequently established the "Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic." Afterwards, the Soviet secret police began persecuting suspected anti-Communists, a population that included many Lithuanian Jews.⁵⁷

Latvia, the final region this paper will touch on, was annexed by the Soviet Union in August of 1940.⁵⁸ As is in the case of Lithuania, evidence exists to show that Latvians suffered at the hands of the Soviets prior to Nazi occupation. The period of time between annexation and Nazi occupation is often referred to as the first Soviet occupation of Latvia, but that is a relatively tame reference, one applied by historians

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Polish-Jewish Refugees in Lithuania 1939-40," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Polish-Jewish-Refugees-in-Lithuania-1939-40>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

⁵⁸ "Latvia," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/Latvia>. Accessed 4/27/2020.

and other writers. To those Latvian citizens who experienced this same time period, it was (and still is in some circles) known as “the terror.” The Soviets began by dissolving Latvia’s army by force. They then proceeded to nationalize property, collectivize farms, and attack churches. Communism was strictly applied, and anyone who resisted, or was even suspected of such, was arrested and often murdered. Those who were not killed in such a fashion usually still suffered imprisonment in camps, forced resettlement, or large-scale deportations to remote regions of the Soviet Union. In all three cases, the accompanying conditions were often fatal. Political prisoners were usually deported, tortured, or executed - many times all of the above.⁵⁹ Again, however, there is no evidence to indicate that Latvia’s Jews were targeted for persecution specifically. Rather, the degree to which Jews would have fallen victim specifically to any of the atrocities committed by the Soviets in Latvia in greater proportion than members of other groups would have been determined by the presence or absence of antisemitic sentiment inherent in the officials who carried out the general orders.

What was more apparent than Soviet antisemitism was the antisemitism that was rampant in the Latvian government and populace itself. This is supported by the fact that members of Latvia’s government and general population joined the Einsatzgruppen when the Nazis invaded in June and July of 1941. This combination proved to be extremely lethal, as it resulted in the execution of practically all of Latvia’s Jewish population.⁶⁰ Prior to WWII, there were approximately 93,500 Jews living in Latvia.⁶¹ When the region was reclaimed by the Soviets in 1944, only a few hundred Jews

⁵⁹ “The Three Occupations of Latvia 1940-1991: Soviet And Nazi Take-Overs And Their Consequences.” Occupation Museum Foundation. RIGA. 2005. 17-25.

⁶⁰ “Latvia,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁶¹ “Jewish Losses During The Holocaust”

remained.⁶² The story of what happened to the rest is a dark one. Ghettos were established for those who survived the initial killing by the Einsatzgruppen and their Latvian turncoats. That hardly guaranteed their survival, however, as the Einsatzgruppen murdered nearly everyone in the camps in pretty short order. In fact, only 5,000 Latvian Jews remained by 1943.⁶³ Most of the Latvian Jews killed during the Holocaust were dead by the end of 1941, as the result of a systematic, two-phased plan. The first phase took place from July to October of 1941 and targeted Latvia's rural Jewish population. Those Jews living in the cities or in one of the newly-established ghettos, were killed during the second phase, which took place from November to December of 1941. That was the fate suffered by 25,000 Jews in the ghetto at Riga, all of whom were executed during the "Rumbula Massacre" in November and December of 1941.⁶⁴

Here, there is a need to sift through the numbers more carefully; otherwise, the statistics seem to contradict one another. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has estimated that 70,000 Latvian Jews perished during the Holocaust.⁶⁵ That same study also indicates a pre-war Jewish population of 93,500.⁶⁶ It has also been asserted that when the Nazis occupied Latvia, there were approximately 66,000 Jews, and that the Einsatzgruppen had killed 59,000 of them by the end of 1941.⁶⁷ If one takes these statistics at face value, there were either 23,500 surviving Latvian Jews at the end

⁶² "Latvia," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team," Einsatzgruppen A-Mass Murder of Jews in Latvia, www.HolocaustResearchProject.org.

⁶⁵ "Jewish Losses During The Holocaust: By Country"

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team"

of the war, or only 7,000 remained at the end of 1941. Add to that the claim that only a few hundred remained upon Soviet reoccupation, and it becomes very unclear what can and cannot be believed. The fact is that they are all accurate. A large number of Latvia's pre-Holocaust Jewish population had either fled or perished during the first period of Soviet occupation, so the number was down to around 66,000 when the Nazis invaded. Others managed to escape during Nazi occupation. Of those remaining, nearly all had been murdered by the time the Soviets returned. It is said that the only people to greet the Soviets as "liberators" when they re-entered Latvia in 1944 were those who had not experienced the Soviet "terror" of 1940 and 1941.⁶⁸ That can only be true, however, of the non-Jewish population, as there was basically no remaining Jewish population in Latvia for the Soviets to take note of in the first place. The thousands of Latvian Jews who were either returned from concentration camps or who came back to the region from the Soviet territories to which they had escaped earlier, did not appear in Latvia again until the closing days of the war.⁶⁹ Any specific persecution suffered by Latvian Jews at the hands of the Soviet Union, therefore, would have taken place after – not during - the war. While this falls outside the scope of this project, it does do further damage to the notion that Hitler and Stalin are comparable in terms of their treatment of European Jews *during* the war.

Analyzing The Findings

This project was undertaken in order to unearth any evidence that might exist as to the victimization of Jews and/or other populations at the hands of the Soviets in

⁶⁸ "The Three Occupations"

⁶⁹ "Latvia," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Eastern Europe during WWII, to compare Soviet treatment of Jews with that of non-Jews, and to form one or more possible hypotheses based on the available information. Those possible hypotheses are as follows: 1) Stalin, motivated by antisemitism, initiated a top-down system of persecution against the Jews of Eastern Europe that was equally as brutal as the system implemented by Hitler and the Nazis. 2) Stalin, motivated by imperialism and territorial expansion, initiated a top-down system of violence and murder against a number of Eastern European citizens, and Jews were not treated with any more or less brutality than any other demographic. 3) The Red Army, motivated by antisemitism, and left largely unchecked in large and defenseless territories, initiated a low-level system of persecution against the Jews of Eastern Europe that was equally as brutal as the system implemented by Hitler and the Nazis. 4) The Red Army, left largely unchecked in large and defenseless territories, initiated a low-level system of persecution against a number of Eastern European citizens, and Jews were not treated with any more or less brutality than any other demographic. 5) The violence against Jews and other citizens in Eastern Europe was haphazard, and was not controlled or condoned by either Stalin at the top or officers in the Red Army at the bottom.

Taking these five possibilities one at a time, the notion that there was a top-down Soviet campaign of persecution against the Jews of Eastern Europe cannot be supported by the evidence present in this body of work. In fact, there is ample evidence to suggest that the opposite is true. That evidence is found in the legal documents of the RSFSR, which show that low-level officials operating in Soviet territories were actually brought up on charges and convicted of persecutorial behavior against Jews. This would not have been the case had there been a top-down system of antisemitic

behavior. If such a system had been present, these officials would not have been charged. If they had been charged, they certainly would not have been tried and convicted.

In terms of the second hypothesis, it is entirely possible, based on the evidence presented here, that Stalin initiated a top-down system of violence and murder against a number of Eastern European citizens, and that Jews were often included within those populations, but not targeted specifically. In fact, this did happen many times, as evidenced by the 1940 deportation of 137,794 Polish citizens who were sent to either Siberia or Kazakhstan for forced labor in the Gulags. Further evidence is found in the Katyn Forest Massacre, the mass execution of 14,700 Polish prisoners of war. Continuing in this vein, some 30,000 Poles were executed by the Soviets prior to Operation Barbarossa, to say nothing of the 110,000 who were arrested, 25,000 of whom died in custody. Still more confirmation can be found in the persecution of suspected anti-Communists in Lithuania by the Soviet secret police (NKVD), and the imposition of Communism on the citizens of Latvia during the Soviet Union's first occupation of the territory, as well as the execution of all who resisted.

As for the third and fourth hypotheses, which involve the Jews being targeted specifically by Soviet soldiers, and the general civilian populations being targeted specifically by Soviet soldiers, the evidence amassed in this body of work can neither confirm nor refute such a hypothesis. While there is evidence of low-level officials engaging in antisemitic behavior, those officials do not appear to have been soldiers. Even if they had been, any bottom-up system of antisemitism on the part of the soldiers themselves would have been silenced by the soldiers themselves. The fact that reports

of antisemitic treatment were taken down at the lowest levels and sent up the chain of command to be investigated makes it unlikely that the Red Army was engaged in any official system of Jewish persecution, but this isn't certain. Something of the same thing is true of the possible hypothesis regarding a bottom-up system of Soviet violence against multiple civilian populations. While this may have been the case, the evidence here shows that, while multiple demographics did suffer at the hands of the Soviets, it was in response to directives coming from the top down, rather than originating at the lower levels.

The final hypothesis - that Soviet violence in Eastern Europe was haphazard and undirected - can be refuted to a certain extent by the evidence presented here. It seems that, at least in the overwhelming majority of cases, all violence, whether specifically sanctioned or not, was conducted under the umbrella of the orders that came through the chain of command. The extent to which those orders were carried out with varying degrees of violence and bloodshed from one region to another, or from one demographic to another, was determined by the presence or absence of cruelty and/or antisemitism present in the local or regional officials who carried out those orders. Thus, Soviet violence varied by region, and often was directed at potential regime opponents, often anti-Communists, and included Jewish opponents.

Conclusion

Given the number of possible hypotheses this body of work failed to definitively confirm or refute, one might well wonder what it is that would initiate such a study in the first place. The answer is a desire for responsible and honest historical research and

writing. Responsible and honest history, as opposed to rhetoric, rumor, conjecture, or hyperbole, often seems incomplete in comparison, due to the fact that it freely admits its limitations. Laypeople and amateur historians alike will often toss about unsubstantiated claims linking the behavior of Stalin and the Red Army with that of Hitler and the Nazis, and painting both leaders with the same antisemitic brush. As with all such irresponsible statements, there is rarely any evidence presented, and almost never is there any nuance provided or allowed for. This project was undertaken in the false anticipation of substantiating the comparisons between Hitler and Stalin, thereby offering evidence to previously irresponsible statements. That did not end up being the case, but neither were such claims categorically rejected. Rather, this project provided the nuance that was previously missing.

The fact of the matter is that Stalin may well have been every bit as antisemitic as Hitler, and that he did order the murder of a number of European Jews based on this antisemitism. It is also possible that the Red Army murdered countless Jews in the Soviet Union and elsewhere due to their own antisemitic sentiment. What is clear from this body of work, however, is that if these things happened, they did not take place during the Soviet Union's war with the Nazis. In some cases, the Soviet legal system prevented and/or punished antisemitic behavior during the war, in others the Nazis simply murdered so many of the Jews in territories that would later be occupied or reoccupied by the Soviet Union that Soviet persecution of the Jews was a moot point. Of course, the data presented here has limitations. Given the Soviet Union's tradition of secrecy, the possibility certainly exists that atrocities were committed against the Jews specifically by Stalin and the Red Army during WWII, but that they were unrecorded,

recorded but classified and sealed, or doctored and given a positive spin. It is even possible, albeit disturbing, that the statistics in existence regarding Nazi crimes against humanity are actually concealing Soviet murders.

Future Research

After conducting this research, it is clear that Soviet record-keeping warrants further academic attention. A number of archives have become more available to historians since the collapse of the Soviet Union; prior to that, documents relating to Soviet conduct during and after WWII were strictly off-limits. Even so, it remains unclear which areas of Soviet history were recorded but held in secret and which areas received no documentation to begin with. As difficult as it is to prove a negative, some degree of extrapolation would be of benefit here, as the absence of documentation relating to the major periods and areas of Soviet occupation during WWII could be an indication that atrocities were committed but lost to history because they were not recorded by anyone, or those recordings were destroyed.

Beyond that, however, is the issue of Stalin's antisemitism - the existence of which is not really in question, but rather the degree. In their article "Hitler, Stalin, and Authoritarianism," Mir Zohair Husain and Scott Liebertz argue:

Stalin's antisemitism developed during the second World War, rejecting the long Communist tradition of accepting Jews, who were instrumental in the ideology's development. Stalin sought to sever this link as his nationalist ideology intensified.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Mir Zohair Husain & Scott Liebertz, "Hitler, Stalin, and Authoritarianism: A Comparative Analysis (Part 2)." *The Journal of Psychohistory* 47 (2019): 19-36.

Further research, then, is warranted in terms of the degree to which Stalin was not antisemitic to begin with but became so during the post-war years. Research is also needed with regard to if and to what extent this antisemitism was transmitted across the entire Soviet bureaucracy, how many Jewish deaths it resulted in, and how much it was dictated by Israel's alliance with the United States, as Stalin withdrew his recognition of Israel after this alliance occurred. It may be that the Jews murdered by Stalin and the Red Army during the post-war period, or those killed during the Soviet purges that occurred pre-war, are so great in number that they are responsible for the mistaken impulse to equate Hitler and Stalin in terms of their behavior during the war, and this needs to be researched as well. Regardless, it is clear from the evidence presented in this body of work that a significant amount of nuance and aggregation are necessary when comparing the crimes committed by Hitler and the Nazis with those that can be attributed to Stalin and the Red Army. While both men are guilty of myriad atrocities, it is the timing of those atrocities and not the number that is important when attempting to link their behavior during WWII, a link that this paper largely refutes.

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