Poland under German and Soviet Occupation 1939–1941: Approaches to a Comparison

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ABSTRACT

On 1 September 1939, Nazi Germany attacked Poland. As Adolf Hitler had agreed with Stalin on the partition of the country, the Red Army invaded Poland on 17 September. Thus, until the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, Poland came under the synchronous rule of two extreme occupation powers. Within this context limited by time and space, Poland offers almost ideal conditions for a synchronic comparison of the Soviet and German occupation regimes.

This article discusses the question of how a comparison of dictatorships can be designed in a meaningful way, namely within a synchronous sectoral comparison of the Soviet and German suppression of the Polish resistance. Numerous parallels emerge: Both occupiers set up task forces, which, in the wake of the armies, arrested potential political enemies. Mass murder, though, was in this early phase of the occupation only committed by the German task forces of the security police. Both secret police apparatuses set up their surveillance systems and carried out preventive actions directed against certain social groups. At the same time, countless resistance initiatives emerged based on pre-war military, political and civil organizations. The Polish government-in-exile initiated the founding of the Union of Armed Struggle, which endeavored to unite the various resistance groups under its umbrella.

In its fight against opponents, the Soviet secret police—the NKVD—proceeded in a much more targeted and professional manner than the German security police. The NKVD, drawing on much greater human resources and experience, recruited agents and informers from all social classes into its surveillance apparatus.

KEYWORDS: Poland, World War II, Soviet occupation, German occupation, comparison of dictatorship, Polish resistance, NKVD, Gestapo, German Security Police

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"In comparison with the NKVD, the methods of the Gestapo are childish,"[1] wrote Leopold Okulicki, the commander of the Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ) from Soviet-occupied Poland to his superior, Stefan Rowecki, at the end of January 1941.[2] Okulicki knew what he was talking about, having already fought for a year in the Polish resistance against the German occupiers and then headed the ZWZ in Soviet-occupied L'viv for two months.

The fact that a member of the Polish underground was able to gain experience under two such radical occupation regimes in such a short time resulted from the "Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pact," in which Adolf Hitler and Stalin divided their spheres of influence in East Central Europe. Poland, which after the three partitions at the end of the eighteenth century had reappeared on the map as a sovereign state only after World War I, was thus partitioned for the fourth time.

German troops invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, without declaring war. Since the contents of the additional protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pact were secret, the Red Army's invasion of eastern Poland on 17 September 1939 came as a complete surprise. The Polish army had no chance against the two overpowering neighbors and surrendered on 6 October.[3] The Polish government fled to Romania, where its members were interned. Around the opposition politician, General Władysław Sikorski, a government-in-exile was constituted on 30 September 1939, which initially resided in Paris and Angers and moved its seat to London shortly before France's surrender in June 1940.[4]

As part of the German-Soviet Border and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939, the demarcation line along the Pisa, Narew and San rivers was moved further east. As a consequence, the Lublin voivodeship as well as parts of the Warsaw voivodeship came into the German sphere of influence. The German occupiers divided their conquests into two structures, each with a different sta-

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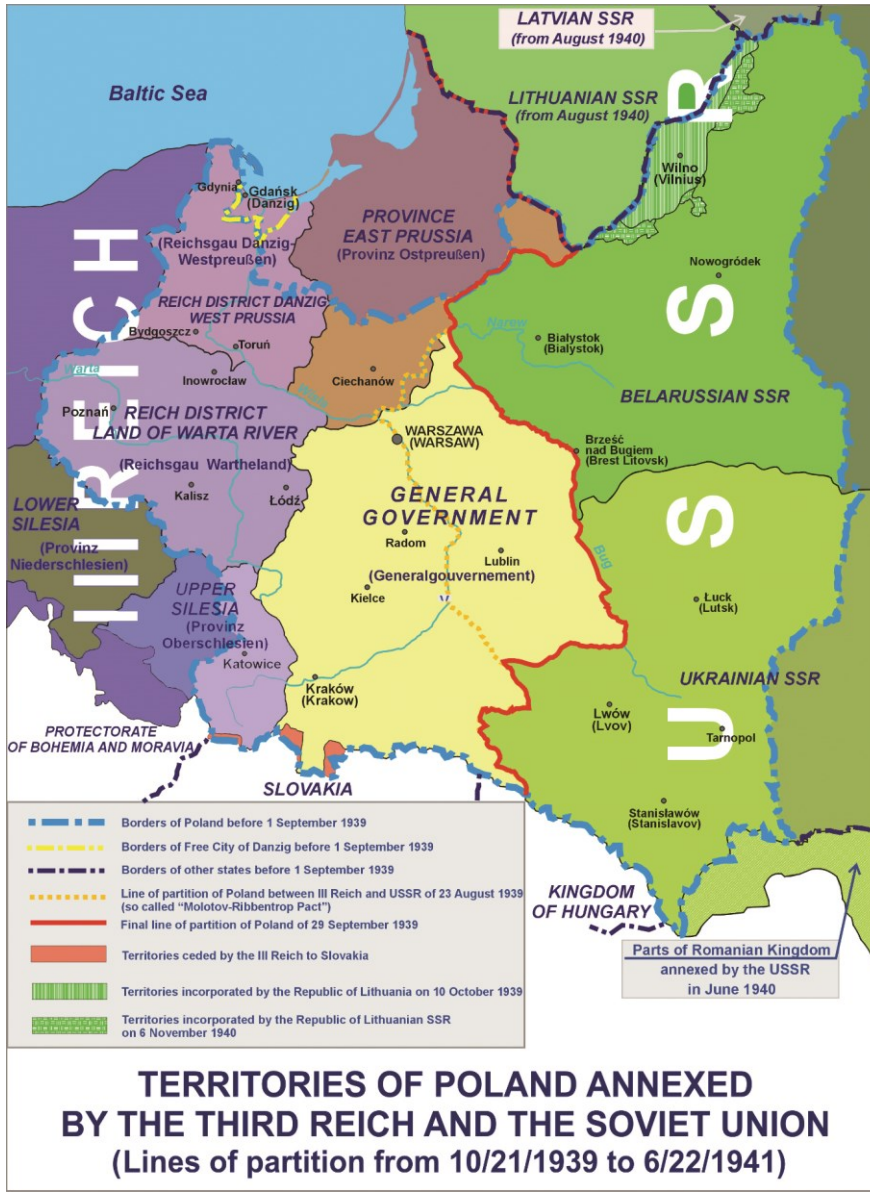
1 Leopold Okulicki's situation report of 1941-01-22 confiscated by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del, NKVD), in: WIKTOR KOMOGOROW (ed.): Polskie podziemie na terenach Zachodniej Ukrainy i Zachodniej Białorusi w latach 1939–1941 [Polish Underground in the Territories of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus in 1939–1941]. Vol. 1: Meldunki, raporty, sprawozdania i analizy NKWD-NKGD ZSRS [Messages, Reports, and Analyses of the NKVD-NKGB of the USSR], Warszawa—Moskva 2001, pp. 462–481, here p. 475.

2 This conceptual article, which emerged from the author's dissertation project ("Erzfeind Polen": Sowjetische und deutsche Widerstandsbekämpfung im besetzten Polen, September 1939 – Juni 1941, https://netlibrary.aau.at/obvuklhs/content/titleinfo/8638644/full.pdf), submitted at the University of Klagenfurt in December 2022, offers a new perspective on the contemporary history of East Central Europe, integrated into the new comparative dictatorship research. All translations were done by the author.

3 WŁODZIMIERZ BORODZIEJ: Geschichte Polens im 20. Jahrhundert, München 2010, pp. 189–191.

4 WOLFGANG JACOBMEYER: Heimat und Exil: Die Anfänge der polnischen Untergrundbewegung im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Hamburg 1973, pp. 19–20.



The fourth partition of Poland, September 1939 – June 1941, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9c/Occupation_of_Poland_1939.png (2023-10-13)

tus: Poznań, Pomerelia, Upper Silesia and parts of the voivodeships of Łódź, Kielce, Kraków and Warsaw they incorporated into the German Reich. The areas of central Poland they combined into a kind of semi-colony—the "General Government for the Occupied Polish Territories."[5] The Soviet Union annexed the Polish eastern territories and assigned them to the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic respectively. The former Lithuanian capital Vilnius including its surrounding area, which Poland had conquered in 1920, ceded to Lithuania.[6]

Thus, Poland was ruled by two strongly ideologized dictatorships, whose intentions, however, differed considerably. The western and northern territories of Poland incorporated into the German Reich were to be "Germanized." This was to be done through the eradication of Polish culture, the complete exclusion of Poles from the administration, and the deportation of millions of Polish citizens. In the General Government, which was to serve primarily as a deportation target and labor reservoir,[7] extensive de-industrialization was planned. The occupation policy was implemented there in a somewhat more coarse-meshed manner, and collaboration was permitted at the lowest level.[8] The Soviet Union aimed at complete "Sovietization" of the newly won territories, i.e., the population was to remain, but "hostile elements" were to be isolated and eventually deported. The objective was a full enforcement of the Communist Party, the integration of large parts of society and a complete conversion to a planned economy, i.e. the expropriation and disempowering of propertied classes.[9] To a much greater extent than the German occupiers, the Soviet side relied

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5 Bogdan Musiał: Das Schlachtfeld zweier totalitärer Systeme: Polen unter deutscher und sowjetischer Herrschaft 1939–1941, in: Klaus-Michael Mallmann, Bogdan Musiał (eds.): Genesis des Genozids: Polen 1939–1941, Darmstadt 2004, pp. 13–35, here p. 13; Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, Bogdan Musiał: Die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen 1939–1945, in: Włodzimierz Borodziej, Klaus Ziemer (eds.): Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen 1939—1945—1949: Eine Einführung, Osnabrück 2000, pp. 43–111, here pp. 49–50; Maria Rutowska: Nationalsozialistische Verfolgungsmaßnahmen gegenüber der polnischen Zivilbevölkerung in den eingegliederten polnischen Gebieten, in: Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk (ed.): Polen unter deutscher und sowjetischer Besatzung 1939–1945, Osnabrück 2009, pp. 197–216, here p. 198; Piotr Majewski: Nationalsozialistische Unterdrückungsmaßnahmen im Generalgouvernement während der Besatzung, ibid., pp. 173–196, here p. 175.

6 Alexander Brakel: Unter Rotem Stern und Hakenkreuz: Baranowicze 1939 bis 1944. Das westliche Weißrussland unter sowjetischer und deutscher Besatzung, Paderborn et al. 2009, p. 1.

7 Alexandra Pulvermacher: Early Deportations of Jews in Occupied Poland (October 1939 – June 1940): The German and the Soviet Case, in: Holocaust and Genocide Studies 36 (2022), 2, pp. 125–153, here pp. 126–127.

8 Czesław Madajczyk: Allgemeine Richtlinien der deutschen Besatzungspolitik in Polen, in: Młynarczyk, pp. 37–51, here pp. 40–41.

9 Albin Głowacki: Sowieci wobec Polaków na ziemiach wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej: 1939–1941 [The Soviets against the Poles in the Eastern Territories of the Second Polish Republic: 1939–1941], Łódź 1998, pp. 128–143.

on an active nationality policy, which was not least reflected in the preferential treatment of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population over the Polish.[10]

The two radical occupation regimes that ruled Poland for a period of 21 months provide almost ideal conditions for a synchronous comparison of dictatorships.[11] By comparing their occupations of Poland, it is much easier to draw more universal conclusions about Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union than by comparing these regimes themselves. How such a comparison is to be designed is discussed below.

Conceptual Considerations

In the twentieth century, Stalinism in the Soviet Union and National Socialism in Germany gave rise to two totalitarian extreme forms of modern dictatorship, which have been compared with each other time and again since their existence.[12] Both were explicitly linked to ideological concepts of violence: the Bolsheviks in their "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the National Socialists in their Social Darwinist "struggle of the races." Both were "mass movement regimes" that were not solely concerned with imposing their rule by force. Moreover, the societies were to be "totally" penetrated and a "new man" was to be created.[13]

An early approach to a comparative interpretation of the two regimes centers around the concept of totalitarianism, which has its roots in the 1920s. The term "totalitarian" was first used in 1923 by the liberal politician and journalist Giovanni Amendola in the newspaper *Il Mondo*, when he described Benito Mussolini's regime as a "totalitarian system" (*sistema totalitaria*). Two years later, in his speech to the Fourth Congress of the National Fascist Party (Partito Na-

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10 GRZEGORZ HRYCIUK: Polacy we Lwowie 1939–1944: Życie codzienne [Poles in Lviv 1939–1944: Everyday Life], Warszawa 2000, pp. 44–49.

11 DIETER POHL: Nationalsozialistische und stalinistische Massenverbrechen: Überlegungen zum wissenschaftlichen Vergleich, in: JÜRGEN ZARUSKY (ed.): Stalin und die Deutschen: Neue Beiträge der Forschung, München 2006, pp. 252–263, here p. 257; see also MICHAEL GEYER: Introduction: After Totalitarianism—Stalinism and Nazism Compared, in: MICHAEL GEYER, SHEILA FITZPATRICK (eds.): Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared, Cambridge 2009, pp. 1–37. The essays published in this anthology are the most far-reaching attempt to date to compare Stalinism and National Socialism.

12 See DETLEF SCHMIECHEN-ACKERMANN: Diktaturen im Vergleich, Darmstadt 2010, pp. 78–82.

13 DETLEF SCHMIECHEN-ACKERMANN: Diktaturforschung und Diktaturenvergleich zwischen "Streitgeschichte" und systematischer Analyse, in: ANDREAS KÖTZING, FRANCESCA WEIL et al. (eds.): Vergleich als Herausforderung: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Günther Heydemann, Göttingen 2015, pp. 45–58, here pp. 45–46.

zionale Fascista), Mussolini adopted the term as a positive connoted description for his regime.[14]

Liberal critics increasingly identified parallels between the Italian and Soviet systems, later also National Socialist Germany was included in the concept. In the 1950s, a complex discussion of totalitarianism emerged from this liberal approach, decisively shaped by the philosophers and political scientists Hannah Arendt,[15] Jacob Talmon,[16] Zbigniew Brzeziński, and Carl Joachim Friedrich.[17]

Starting in the U.S., an increasingly orthodox view of the Soviet Union and its satellites developed in academia in the context of the Cold War. However, the central aspects of totalitarian dictatorships, such as mass crimes, receded into the background. This one-sided interpretation of the concept of totalitarianism persisted into Ronald Reagan's administration, during which it reached a climax.[18] In Western Europe, the theory of totalitarianism had already come under criticism earlier. The concept proved problematic due to its historically evolved double structure—as a scientific term for analyzing modern dictatorships and at the same time as a political combat term during the Cold War.[19] Since the 1990s, the concept of totalitarianism has been experiencing a renaissance, especially in the post-communist countries of East Central and Southeast Europe.[20]

In particular, Friedrich's and Brzeziński's model proved to be too static; it could not explain the Soviet Union's development toward an authoritarian dictatorship. The traditional focus on state structures, the secret police, terror and the planned economy became less and less important.[21] Repression by the police, internment in prisons and concentration camps, torture and murder without any examination of possible guilt, repression of entire population groups

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14 ABBOTT GLEASON: Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War, New York—Oxford 1995, pp. 14–16.

15 HANNAH ARENDT: The Origins of Totalitarianism, 5th ed., New York 1973 [1951].

16 J. L. TALMON: The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, London 1952.

17 CARL J. FRIEDRICH, ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, 2nd revised ed., Cambridge, MA 1965 [1956].

18 Cf. GLEASON, p. 196.

19 SCHMIECHEN-ACKERMANN, Diktaturen im Vergleich, p. 48; DETLEF SCHMIECHEN-ACKERMANN: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Diktaturenvergleichs, in: Totalitarismus und Demokratie 2 (2005), pp. 15–38, here p. 31; IAN KERSHAW: "Working towards the Führer": Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship, in: IAN KERSHAW (ed.): Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison, Cambridge 2000, pp. 88–106, here pp. 88–89.

20 Cf. BIANCA HOENIG: Chancen und Grenzen eines Paradigmas: Die Totalitarismustheorie in Anwendung auf den ostmitteleuropäischen Staatssozialismus, in: Bohemia 49 (2009), 2, pp. 432–444; KLARA MÜHLE, CORNELIA BRUHN: Die Anziehungskraft von Totalitarismus: Die Ursprünge, Bedeutungen und politischen Zyklen eines Konzeptes in Zentral- und Osteuropa [conference report], in: H-Soz-Kult, 15.02.2017, www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/fdkn-125591 (2022-07-24).

21 GLEASON, p. 128.

on the basis of certain categories, the impossibility for victims to defend themselves, court proceedings in camera, and the imposition of punishments that are disproportionate to the alleged crime—all these components are attributed to totalitarian systems. But upon closer examination, it turns out that these aspects also occurred in authoritarian systems, such as the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic 1930–1961 and Francoist Spain.[22]

Of Friedrich's and Brzeziński's six characteristics—first, an elaborate ideology, second, a mass party, third, a terror system, fourth, a press monopoly, fifth, a weapons monopoly, and sixth, a centrally controlled economy—only two remain. The first characteristic is ideology, and with it the aim of creating a "new man" and a new society.[23] The second, to date valid characteristic of totalitarian dictatorships consists in the system terror, more precisely in the preventive, ideologically justified "destruction" of an alleged enemy by the secret police.[24] Secret police had also emerged in authoritarian systems of earlier decades; the Ottoman Empire, for instance, had one of the largest apparatuses of its kind in the world around 1900.[25] As part of the Ottoman secret police apparatus, the Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa (Special Organization) from 1911 to 1918 fought real and perceived political opponents at home and abroad.[26] At the same time, the Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa lacked a generally binding ideology that encompassed all areas of life, as well as the structural enemy images associated with it, although it played a leading role in the Armenian genocide.[27]

The question arises as to what distinguished the Soviet and German secret police from corresponding units in authoritarian systems, what made them "totalitarian." This article argues that it was the ideologically based claim to completely destroy the enemy, with a closer look at the preventive combat against opponents in particular. The totalitarian combat of opponents was directed against certain groups of people without them being guilty of any crime.[28] In

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22 JUAN J. LINZ: Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, London 2000, pp. 91–104.

23 Cf. CHRISTOPHER R. BROWNING, LEWIS H. SIEGELBAUM: Frameworks for Social Engineering: Stalinist Schema of Identification and the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, in: MICHAEL GEYER, SHEILA FITZPATRICK (eds.): Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared, Cambridge 2009, pp. 231–265; LINZ, pp. 76–78.

24 LINZ, pp. 103–104.

25 NIHAL KUBILAY PINAR: Die Zensurgeschichte der Türkei: Vom Osmanischen Reich des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Türkei der Gegenwart, Marburg 2014, pp. 23–24.

26 ODILE MOREAU: Teskilat-i Mahsusa (Ottoman Empire), in: International Encyclopedia of the First World War, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/teskilat-i_mahsusa_ottoman_empire (2022-10-08).

27 Cf. RONALD GRIGOR SUNY: "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide, Princeton—Oxford 2015, chapter 9; DONALD BLOXAM: The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy, in: Past & Present 181 (2003), 1, pp. 141–191; TANER AKÇAM: A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility, London 2007, pp. 92–96, 127–146.

28 LINZ, p. 103.

this context, both ideology and the structural enemy images associated with it are of an importance that cannot be overestimated. Both the German and the Soviet secret police cadres were indoctrinated accordingly—in National Socialist schools of the Führer (*Führerschulen*) and Stalinist NKVD colleges, respectively.[29]

The difficulties in defining "totalitarian" are probably also responsible for the fact that comparisons of dictatorships were highly controversial in Germany until the 1990s. Given the justifiably perceived danger of trivializing National Socialism, there was an aversion in German historical scholarship to comparisons of the Nazi dictatorship and its mass crimes with other regimes. As a result, the semantic difference between "comparing" and "equating" was increasingly lost sight of, although the political scientist Amos Perlmutter had already noted in 1981, "Apples and pears are not identical. Nazism cannot be equated with praetorianism or bolshevism with fascism, but they can be compared."[30]

In the 1990s and 2000s, several comparative studies of dictatorships appeared,[31] the temporal scope of which is very broad. This is problematic insofar as the comparison of National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union results in an asynchrony that makes it difficult to define a frame of reference. The two states differed not only in terms of size, geographic location and population structure, but also in terms of their histories. From the turn of the millennium onward, several studies on "spaces of violence" emerged that included more or less far-reaching comparisons of Stalinist and National Socialist mass crimes.[32] Probably Timothy Snyder developed the most successful and most widely received "space of violence." His *Bloodlands*[33] refer to those areas where both Hitler's and Stalin's imperial plans overlapped and where from 1933 to 1945 some 14 million people were allegedly murdered. Mark Levene's comparison of the two occupations in Poland, which he undertakes in a chapter

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29 MICHAEL WILDT: Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes, Hamburg 2002, p. 335; CARSTEN DAMS, MICHAEL STOLLE: Die Gestapo: Herrschaft und Terror im Dritten Reich, München 2009, pp. 43–44; NIKITA V. PETROV, K. V. SKORKIN: Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934–1941: Spravochnik [Who headed the NKVD 1934–1941: Reference Book], Moskva 1999; NIKITA V. PETROV: Kto rukovodil organami gosbezopasnosti 1941–1954: Spravochnik [Who Headed the Organs of State Security 1941–1954: Reference Book], Moskva 2010.

30 Cited in: SCHMIECHEN-ACKERMANN, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Diktaturenvergleichs, p. 15.

31 ALAN BULLOCK: Hitler und Stalin: Parallele Leben, München 1993; ROBERT GELLATELY: Lenin, Stalin und Hitler: Drei Diktatoren, die Europa in den Abgrund führten, Bergisch Gladbach 2009; RICHARD OVERY: Die Diktatoren: Hitlers Deutschland, Stalins Russland, München 2005.

32 DIETRICH BEYRAU: Schlachtfeld der Diktatoren: Osteuropa im Schatten von Hitler und Stalin, Göttingen 2000; JÖRG BABEROWSKI, ANSELM DOERING-MANTEUFFEL: The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror: National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union as Multiethnic Empires, in: GEYER/FITZPATRICK, pp. 180–227.

33 TIMOTHY SNYDER: Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, New York 2010.

of his study *The Crisis of Genocide*,[34] however, is more analytical. Levene concludes that both the German and the Soviet occupiers aimed at disintegrating the Poles as a nation.[35] Snyder's spatial approach is a construct that he himself does not always apply consistently: Spatially, the *Bloodlands* encompass the western parts of the Second Polish Republic, where Stalinist terror hardly played a role at all. It leaves out the North Caucasus, where both Stalinists and National Socialists raged, and also Russia is almost completely neglected as a space of violence.[36]

In temporal terms, such a study would have to commence as early as 1914 to account for the rampant violence against civilians during World War I and the Russian Civil War. This is problematic from a comparative perspective, however, since the National Socialist regime did not come to power until 19 years later.[37] In Levene's case, on the other hand, the frame of reference is self-evident due to the temporal limitation to the phase from the German and Soviet invasion of Poland to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, as well as the spatial limitation to the Second Polish Republic, which lay further east than present-day Poland.[38] During this short period, several parallels emerged: both occupiers tried to install "new orders" in the conquered territories by means of countless arrests, deportations and murder actions directed against Polish citizens—the Soviet occupiers according to social criteria, the German occupiers mainly according to racial ones.

Intervention fields

In the meantime, there are numerous studies[39] in which the two occupations are compared in rudimentary ways, but in most cases they are merely juxtaposed.

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34 MARK LEVENE: The Crisis of Genocide. Vol. 2: Annihilation. The European Rimlands 1939–1953, Oxford 2013.

35 LEVENE, chapter 1.

36 ALEXANDRA PULVERMACHER: Räume der Gewalt analysieren: Die Konzepte *Bloodlands*, *Rimlands* und *Borderlands* im Vergleich, in: Acta Philologica 59 (2022), pp. 75–84, here pp. 76–77.

37 JÜRGEN ZARUSKY: Timothy Snyders "Bloodlands": Kritische Anmerkungen zur Konstruktion einer Geschichtslandschaft, in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 60 (2012), 1, pp. 1–31, here pp. 2, 27–28.

38 LEVENE, chapter 1.

39 E.g. WŁODZIMIERZ BONUSIAK: Polska podczas II wojny światowej [Poland during World War II], Rzeszów 1995; MUSIAŁ; WŁODZIMIERZ JASTRZĘBSKI: Sowietyzacja kresów wschodnich i germanizacja ziem zachodnich: Dwie konzepcje polityki okupantów na ziemiach polskich w dobie II wojny światowej [Sovietization of the Eastern Borderlands and Germanization of the Western Lands: Two Conceptions of the Policy of the Occupying Powers in the Polish Lands in the Era of World War II], in: ADAM SUDOŁ (ed.): Sowietyzacja Kresów Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej po 17 września 1939, Bydgoszcz 1998, pp. 81–87; BOGDAN CHRZANOWSKI, PIOTR NIWIŃSKI: Okupacja niemiecka i sowiecka—próba analizy porównawczej [The German and the Soviet Occupation—A

Two successful diachronic comparisons that focus on the succession of Soviet, German, and a second phase of Soviet occupation are by Alexander Brakel[40] and Grzegorz Hryciuk.[41] Günther Häufele undertook a concise sectoral comparison of economic exploitation in 1997.[42] The fundamental difference between the systems, however, sets clear limits to an economic comparison.

A more suitable field of intervention for a sectoral comparison is the combat of Polish resistance by the Soviet and German secret police. From September 1939, the German Reich and the Soviet Union faced similar problems in Poland. The two occupying powers preventively persecuted certain social groups that they believed could organize and carry out resistance, including political and social elites, the clergy, and teachers. In doing so, both regimes drew on stereotypes, such as that of the "Polish insurgent" that had emerged in the nineteenth century, when the strengthening Polish national movement had attempted to free itself from Russian and Prussian rule in several uprisings. Polish society serves as *tertium comparationis*, as it harbored strong resentment against both its eastern and western neighbors and strove to centralize resistance and network it across the newly created borders.[43] Both the German and the Soviet secret police infiltrated the Polish underground with their agents with the aim of destroying it in the long run.[44]

The Polish military established the first underground structures, linking up with organizations that had already existed before the war. As early as the end

Comparative Analysis], in: Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość 12 (2008), 1, pp. 13–40; RAFAŁ WNUK: Polen zwischen Scylla und Charybdis: Deutsche und sowjetische Besatzung 1939–1941, in: Osteuropa 59 (2009), 7–8, pp. 157–172; GRZEGORZ HRYCIUK, MAŁGORZATA RUCHNIEWICZ, BOŻENA SZAYNOK, ANDRZEJ ŻBIKOWSKI: Umsiedlungen, Vertreibungen und Fluchtbewegungen 1939–1959: Atlas zur Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas, Bonn 2013; SŁAWOMIR DĘBSKI: Między Berlinem a Moskwą: Stosunki niemiecko-sowieckie 1939–1941 [Between Berlin and Moscow: German-Soviet Relations 1939–1941], Warszawa 2007; TOMASZ SZAROTA: Polen unter deutscher Besatzung, 1939–1941: Vergleichende Betrachtungen, in: BERND WEGNER (ed.): Zwei Wege nach Moskau: Vom Hitler-Stalin-Pakt bis zum "Unternehmen Barbarossa," München 1991, pp. 40–74.

40 BRAKEL.

41 HRYCIUK.

42 GÜNTHER HÄUFELE: Deutsche und sowjetische Besatzungspolitik in Polen zwischen 1939 und 1941: Der ökonomische Aspekt, in: Studia Historiae Oeconomicae 22 (1997), pp. 53–67.

43 See e.g. RAFAŁ WNUK: "Za pierwszego Sowieta": Polska konspiracja na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej (wrzesień 1939 – cierwiec 1941) ["Under the First Soviet [Occupation]": Polish Conspiracy in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Republic (September 1939 – June 1941)], Warszawa 2007, p. 368; GRZEGORZ MAZUR: Der Widerstand im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945, in: MŁYNARCZYK, pp. 405–425, here p. 408; MAREK KORNAT: Sehenden Auges: Polens Außenpolitik vor dem Hitler-Stalin-Pakt, in: Osteuropa 59 (2009), 7/8, pp. 47–74.

44 WOJCIECH KÖNIGSBERG, BARTŁOMIEJ SZYPROWSKI: Zlikwidować! Agenci Gestapo i NKWD w szeregach polskiego podziemia [Liquidate! Gestapo and NKVD Agents in the Ranks of the Polish Underground], Kraków 2022.

of September 1939, Polish military officers around General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz founded the Service for Poland's Victory (Służba Zwycięstwu Polski, SZP) in Warsaw. On the initiative of the Polish government-in-exile, the ZWZ was established on 13 November 1939, which henceforth endeavored to unite the entire Polish underground under its leadership.[45] It was more difficult to establish resistance organizations in the areas incorporated into the German Reich than in the General Government. In the annexed territories, the mass murders carried out by the Security Police (SiPo) and the mass deportations deprived the underground of precisely those people from Polish society who would have been most likely to become involved in the resistance. Nevertheless, a number of organizations emerged, most of them with strong nationalist leanings, such as the Headquarters of the Defenders of Poland (Komenda Obrońców Polski, KOP) and Fatherland (Ojczyzna). These organizations established initial underground communication structures and the beginnings of an underground press, an intelligence service, and an underground educational system in the incorporated territories and, to some extent, also in the General Government.[46]

Although the greatest room for maneuver existed in the General Government, the Polish resistance consolidated most rapidly in the Soviet-occupied areas of eastern Poland, with strong regional differences. The center of the Polish conspiracy formed in the L'viv area, where the ZWZ split into supporters and opponents of the *Sanacja*, the nationalist authoritarian regime that had ruled Poland until the German attack.[47] The opponents of the *Sanacja* gathered in the ZWZ-1, which developed into a veritable mass movement with up to 12,000 members. The *Sanacja* supporters formed the ZWZ-2 with another 1,000–2,000 people. The rapid and uncontrolled growth of the L'viv ZWZ organizations facilitated the NKVD's infiltration.[48] In the more sparsely populated voivodeships of Białystok, Nowogródek and Polesia, smaller underground networks emerged, comprising a total of about 6,000 members and

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45 WŁODZIMIERZ BORODZIEJ: Terror und Politik: Die deutsche Polizei und die polnische Widerstandsbewegung im Generalgouvernement 1939–1944, Mainz 1999, pp. 7–8; for General Sikorski's decision regarding the political and military leadership of the country, see: ANDRZEJ SUCHCITZ, KRZYSZTOF BOŻEJEWICZ et al. (eds.): Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945. Tom 1: Wrzesień 1939 – czerwiec 1941 [The Home Army in Documents 1939–1945. Volume 1: September 1939 – June 1941], 2nd ed., Warszawa 2015, part 1, doc. 3, pp. 62–64; Sosnkowski to Januszajtis—instructions regarding the organization of the ZWZ, ibid., doc. 7, pp. 74–81.

46 ALEKSANDRA PIETROWICZ: Die Widerstandsbewegung in den eingegliederten polnischen Gebieten, in: MŁYNARCZYK, pp. 427–451, here pp. 431–433; ALEKSANDRA PIETROWICZ: Korpus Zachodni ZWZ-AK w planach i działalności organizacji "Ojczyzna" [The Western Corps of the ZWZ-AK in the Plans and Activities of the "Fatherland" Organization], in: MAREK GAŁĘZOWSKI (ed.): Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945, vol. 1, Warszawa 2015, pp. 149–182, here p. 149.

47 BORODZIEJ, Geschichte Polens im 20. Jahrhundert, pp. 169–176.

48 WNUK, Za pierwszego Sowieta, chapter 2.

based primarily on neighborly and family relationships. In addition, the extensive and inaccessible swamp and forest areas in these regions provided cover for partisan units.[49] The former Lithuanian capital Vilnius and its surrounding area, which had fallen to Poland as a result of the 1921 Treaty of Riga, awarded to Lithuania by the Soviet occupiers. During the nine-month, comparatively mild Lithuanian occupation, the Polish resistance, which numbered about 4,000 members, was able to develop and consolidate relatively well. After the occupation by the Red Army in June 1940, however, the Vilnius underground suffered striking losses as it had enormous difficulties in adjusting to the far more repressive conditions under Soviet occupation.[50] In the Tarnopol and Stanisławów voivodeships, the ZWZ was able to gain only a limited foothold, as ethnic Poles were in the minority there and cooperation with the Ukrainian resistance was almost non-existent.[51]

The German and Soviet Secret Police Apparatus

The secret police apparatuses in Germany and in the Soviet Union had emerged at different times in completely different contexts: The predecessor organization of the NKVD, the VChK,[52] was founded immediately after the October Revolution on 20 October 1917. It was not until almost 16 years later that the Prussian Secret Police was split off from the internal administration and transformed into the Secret State Police (Geheime Staatspolizei, Gestapo). In both regimes the police, secret police and intelligence service were merged. Thus, police tasks were increasingly elevated to concerns of "state security." While this development had already been underway in the Soviet Union since the early 1930s, the first step in the German Reich was to merge the Gestapo with the Criminal Investigation Department (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo) to form the SiPo in 1936. As part of the establishment of the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA) on 27 September 1939, the SiPo was

49 TOMASZ STRZEMBOSZ: Antysowiecka partyzantka i konspiracja nad Biebrzą: X 1939 – VI 1941 [Anti-Soviet Partisans and Conspiracy on the Biebrza River: X 1939 – VI 1941], Warszawa 2004, pp. 12–20.

50 RAFAŁ WNUK: Der NKVD im Einsatz gegen den polnischen Untergrund, in: JOCHEN BÖHLER, STEPHAN LEHNSTAEDT (eds.): Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945, Osnabrück 2012, pp. 521–539, here p. 522; STRZEMBOSZ.

51 WNUK, Za pierwszego Sowieta, chapters 3–5.

52 All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage under the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissiia po bor'be s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem pri Sovete narodnykh komissarov RSFSR), colloquially also called "Cheka." A. I. KOKURIN, N. V. PETROV (eds.): Lubianka: VChK—OGPU—NKVD—NKGB—MGB—MVD—KGB 1917–1960, Moskva 1997, pp. 8–10.

merged with the SS intelligence service—the so-called Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD).[53]

Both regimes immediately began persecuting actual and perceived opponents. In the wake of the German army, SiPo task forces carried out their missions. Although the task forces were subordinate to the army, in fact the orders and directives of Reinhard Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler determined their activities. Their tasks included "combating all elements hostile to the Reich and Germany in the rear of the hostile force, including, in particular, counterespionage, arrest of politically unreliable persons, seizure of weapons, seizure of documents important to the defense police, etc."[54] According to internal instructions, arrests and shootings were permitted as part of the combat of opponents in Poland. Which measures were to be taken was to be decided by the task forces themselves on site. No explicit liquidation order had yet been issued, but rather general talk of "eliminating" the Polish intelligentsia and resistance.[55] However, in the coming days and weeks, the statements and orders of the Nazi leadership became increasingly concrete and radicalized. Thus, on 3 September 1939, Himmler ordered that armed "insurgents" caught in the act were to be shot on the spot.[56]

The SD and the SiPo had already drawn up lists of "anti-German elements" before the attack on Poland, including members of the Polish intelligentsia and landed gentry as well as priests, but also Jews and other "politically unreliable individuals." The mission of the SiPo task forces was to "eliminate" political opponents in the wake of the German army. Initially, shootings tended to be carried out individually and in secret, but in early October there was a shift toward public mass violence in the form of hostage shootings, executions, and pogroms. The heated atmosphere after the murders of members of the German minority during the so-called "Bloody Sunday" in Bydgoszcz contributed considerably to the radicalization of the SiPo task forces and other units involved.[57]

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53 DAVID SHEARER: Social Disorder, Mass Repression and the NKVD during the 1930s, in: BARRY MCLOUGHLIN, KEVIN MCDERMOTT (eds.): Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union, Houndsmill 2004, pp. 85–117, here p. 117; WILDT, chapter 2; DAMS/STOLLE.

54 Special Order from Army Higher Command for the Task Force of the Security Police, 1939-09-01, and Special Order No. 16 for the supply of the 8th Army, 1939-09-09, quoted in: HELMUT KRAUSNICK: Hitler und die Morde in Polen. Ein Beitrag zum Konflikt zwischen Heer und SS um die Verwaltung der besetzten Gebiete, in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 11 (1963), 2, pp. 196–209, here p. 198; BORODZIEJ, Terror und Politik, p. 52.

55 DOROTHEE WEITBRECHT: Ermächtigung zur Vernichtung: Die Einsatzgruppen in Polen im Herbst 1939, in: MALLMANN/MUSIAŁ, pp. 57–70, here pp. 59–60.

56 KLAUS-MICHAEL MALLMANN, JOCHEN BÖHLER, JÜRGEN MATTHÄUS: Einsatzgruppen in Polen: Darstellung und Dokumentation, Darmstadt 2008, p. 56.

57 During the first days of the German invasion, about 360 members of the German minority had been murdered by Poles in Bydgoszcz; the total number of victims among the German minority in Poland was about 4,500–5,000. VOLKER RIESS: Bromberger

In several internal orders, Heydrich and other high-ranking police officials called for the shooting of alleged partisans and franc-tireurs.[58] In addition, Hitler's pardon decree of 4 October 1939, assured the units extensive impunity.[59] By the end of the year, the SiPo task forces, together with units of the German army and the ethnic German vigilante groups (Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz) had murdered several tens of thousands of Polish citizens, including several thousand Jews. At the end of November, the SiPo task forces were disbanded. Most of the personnel were assigned to the local Gestapo and SiPo departments that had been formed in the meantime. However, the mass murders of Polish citizens within the "Intelligence Action" (*Intelligenzaktion*) and the "Extraordinary Pacification Action" (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*) continued until February 1941.[60]

The counterpart to the SiPo task forces were the operational groups (*opergruppy*) of the NKVD, which were formed in the Soviet Union in early September 1939. Their tasks included the occupation and "securing" of relevant infrastructure, as well as the arresting of individuals who were considered an immediate threat to the occupation regime. Similar to the SiPo task forces, the NKVD *opergruppy* institutionalized themselves by separating smaller units from the respective *opergruppa*.[61] These formed rayon and oblast departments of the NKVD in eastern Poland. Using proscription lists, which had been drawn up since the Red Army's invasion of eastern Poland, the operational groups of

Blutsonntag, in: WOLFGANG BENZ, HERMANN GRAML et al. (eds.): Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus, Stuttgart 1998, pp. 404–405; MALLMANN/BÖHLER/MATTHÄUS, p. 82.

58 MALLMANN/BÖHLER/MATTHÄUS, p. 56.

59 Pardon Decree of the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor, 1939-10-04, in: MARTIN MOLL (ed.): "Führer-Erlasse" 1939–1945: Edition sämtlicher überlieferter, nicht im Reichsgesetzblatt abgedruckter, von Hitler während des Zweiten Weltkrieges schriftlich erteilter Direktiven aus den Bereichen Staat, Partei, Wirtschaft, Besatzungspolitik und Militärverwaltung, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 99–100.

60 MARIA WARDZYŃSKA: Był rok 1939: Operacja niemieckiej policji bezpieczeństwa w Polsce "Intelligenzaktion" [It was 1939: The Operation "Intelligenzaktion" of the German Security Police in Poland], Warszawa 2009, p. 260; ZYGMUNT MAŃKOWSKI: Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion (Akcja AB), in: ZYGMUNT MAŃKOWSKI (ed.): Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion 1940—akcja AB na ziemiach polskich: Materiały z sesji naukowej (6–7 listopada 1986 r.), Warszawa 1992, pp. 6–18, here p. 16.

61 IHOR ILJUSZYN, GRZEGORZ MAZUR: Utworzenie i działalność czekistowskich grup operacyjnych Ukrainy w latach 1939–1940 [Establishment and Activities of Chekist Operation Groups of Ukraine in 1939–1940], in: Zeszyty Historyczne 135 (2001), pp. 49–74, here in particular pp. 51–54; WARDZYŃSKA; KRZYSZTOF JASIEWICZ: Zagłada polskich Kresów: Ziemiaństwo polskie na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941 [The Destruction of the Polish Borderlands: Polish Gentry in the North-Eastern Borderlands of the Republic under Soviet Occupation 1939–1941], Warszawa 1997, pp. 71–85.

the NKVD carried out thousands of arrests in the following weeks.[62] The most significant difference between the SiPo task forces and the NKVD *opergruppy* was that the latter did not commit mass killings in the first weeks and months of the occupation.

The personnel of the German political police differed from their Soviet counterparts in several respects. While the NKVD cadres came from lower-class backgrounds, mostly from working-class and agricultural milieus, the SiPo leadership cadres were men from upper-middle-class backgrounds who had enjoyed above-average education. They were largely composed of academics; the majority of them even had a doctorate, mostly in law. The mid-ranking staff was recruited both from professional police officers, many of whom had been in the police force since the Weimar period, and from new Nazi cadres. The latter had come to the SiPo from other professions, through their membership in the SS or from the SD. The SD men were ideologically trained cadres who worked closely with the secret police in occupied Poland. The common experience of mass killing in the task forces quickly led to a strong ideological indoctrination and radicalization of the Gestapo cadres.[63] The Soviet leadership cadres consisted to a considerable extent of men who had only completed elementary school. The NKVD functionaries had experienced the October Revolution and the turmoil of the ensuing civil war. Many had joined the Red Army and later entered the secret police apparatus of the VChK-OGPU, the precursor of the NKVD, where they had worked their way up the ranks. For the most part, these were typical careers—the proportion of lateral entrants was rather small. Many of the later NKVD cadres had already been members of the Komsomol youth organization before joining the party. Consequently, ideological socialization began much earlier for the Soviet cadres than for their German counterparts and was continued in the NKVD and Red Army colleges in adulthood.[64]

The Soviet and German cadres were of similar age—most were born between 1900 and 1910. The SiPo men belonged to the war youth generation, i.e., they had not fought in World War I because they had been too young. However, many of them had joined a *Freikorps* afterwards and participated in the suppression of the Silesian uprisings, putsch attempts and the suppression of attempted communist revolutions. Among the German cadres deployed in Poland were many men who had grown up in the territories that had fallen to Poland between 1918 and 1921. They had been forced to leave their homeland

62 Jarosław Antoniuk, Jerzy Bednarek et al. (eds.): Rozkaz nr. 001353: Operacja proskrypcyjna NKWD 1939–1941 [Decree No. 001353: The Expulsion Action of the NKVD 1939–1941], Warszawa—Kijów 2020, pp. XXIX, XXXI.

63 Wildt, in particular chapter 1.

64 For examples of careers of NKVD cadres, see Kokurin/Petrov; Petrov.

and had therefore developed very strong resentment against the re-emerged Polish state.[65]

In the 1930s, Soviet secret police cadres experienced several waves of terror, through which they had to learn to interpret changes in the party line and to adapt quickly. A deep break was the "Great Terror," in which many of the NKVD cadres acted as executors on the one hand, but at the same time witnessed their colleagues being executed, especially in the second phase in 1938–1941; many an NKVD man narrowly escaped the arbitrarily carried out "purges."[66] In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic alone, 1,199 NKVD men had been shot in the 1930s.[67] This very concrete but difficult-to-calculate danger of becoming a victim of internal "purges" at any time represents a special aspect and the influence it had on the mentality of the cadres of the Soviet political police cannot be overestimated. Members of the German secret police did not face the prospect of the death penalty, even for serious offenses. In the case of Soviet cadres, on the other hand, mere membership to a certain clique or acquaintance with a person from whom Stalin had withdrawn favor could be a sufficient cause to face a fictitious accusation, for example, of treason or espionage for foreign powers.[68] They were also accused of "violating socialist legality"—a kind of internal rule. This could include, for example, the use of torture as well as the falsification of evidence.[69] Such accusations usually resulted in a death sentence. Since many NKVD members sought to side with the executors rather than the executed, the "Great Terror" developed a fatal momentum of its own. Nikita Khrushchev brought up this aspect in his memoirs:

> "Those who did the interrogating were themselves turned into some kind of machine. And they acted that way, guided by thoughts such as, 'If I don't do it, others will soon be doing it to me; better that I do it than for it be done to me.' It's dreadful to imagine now that Communists felt compelled to be guided in their actions not by political awareness or their own consciences, but by some kind of animal fear, a

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65 See, e.g., the personnel in the Gestapo office Hohensalza: JOCHEN BÖHLER: Die Gestapobeamten des Albums und ihre Dienststellen, in: JACEK ZYGMUNT SAWICKI (ed.): Die Karriere des SS-Oberscharführers Hermann Baltruschat in den Jahren 1939–1943: Das Fotoalbum eines Beamten der Einsatzgruppe und der Geheimen Staatspolizei in den das Dritte Reich eingegliederten polnischen Gebieten, Warszawa 2014, pp. 41–56.

66 As described, for example, for the NKVD oblast office Rivne: ANDRII ZHYV'IUK: "Vykorystani ta vykynuti" ... na Zakhidnu Ukrainu: Vykonavci Velykoho teroru iak "radianizatory" Rivnens'koi oblasti (1939–1941 rr.) ["Used and Disposed of" ... in Western Ukraine: The Perpetrators of the Great Terror as "Sovietizers" in the Rivne Region (1939–1941)], in: Z arkhiviv VUChK, GPU, NKVD, KGB 50 (2018), 2, pp. 69–122.

67 L. N. MAIMESKULOV, A. I. ROGOZHIN, V. V. STASHIS: Vseukrainskaia Chresvychainaia Komissiia (1918–1922) [All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission (1918–1922)], Khar'kov 1990, p. 331.

68 ZHYV'IUK; cf. ALEXANDER VATLIN: Tatort Kunzewo: Opfer und Täter des Stalinschen Terrors 1937/38, Berlin 2003.

69 MARC JUNGE: Stalinistische Modernisierung: Die Strafverfolgung von Akteuren des Staatsterrors in der Ukraine 1939–1941, Bielefeld 2020.

zoological fear for their own lives, and that to save their own skins, they destroyed honest people who were not guilty of anything."[70]

However, the "Great Terror" was not exported to eastern Poland, even though some NKVD cadres contributed their experience gained there. Only the Katyn massacre and the killings of prison inmates before the retreat from the German invaders in June 1941 were of the same quality.

German and Soviet Methods of Suppressing the Enemy

Both the NKVD and SiPo had pertinent knowledge of the methods of combating opponents as well as experience in this field. Both had used the "snowball system"[71]—i.e., identifying new suspects through torture, intimidating as well as deceiving arrestees, and infiltrating resistance groups—even before September 1939.[72] Both pushed the development of a surveillance network in their respective areas of occupation. The NKVD as well as the SiPo sought to obtain as much information as possible through interrogation.[73] Both applied preventive measures against potential resistance activities in Poland. In each case, several hundred thousand Polish citizens were deported. However, there were major differences in the objectives as well as in the concrete implementation: Even though the German deportations had a very negative impact on the development of the Polish underground, they were primarily intended not as a means of combating opponents, but as a measure of "Germanization"—the planned demographic restructuring of East Central Europe. However, in practice, socioeconomic criteria often played a more important role than political or racial ones. Thus, the German occupiers increasingly deported those Polish citizens whose apartments and farms they claimed for "ethnic German re-settlers," who in turn arrived from areas farther east.[74]

The Soviet occupiers, on the other hand, deported at least 320,000 Polish citizens from eastern Poland to the interior of the Soviet Union in order to remove "unreliable elements" from the newly conquered territories.[75] Therefore this measure is to be evaluated as preventive combat of opponents. In February 1940, the NKVD deported military settlers and forestry workers with their fam-

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70 Sergei Khrushchev (ed.): Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Vol. 1: Commissar (1918–1945), University Park, PA 2004, p. 242.

71 Cf. Ulrich Eumann, Jascha März: Das Schneeballsystem der Gestapo bei der Bekämpfung des Widerstandes: Eine Kölner Fallstudie, in: Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften 23 (2012), 1, pp. 126–154.

72 Wnuk, NKVD im Einsatz gegen den polnischen Untergrund, pp. 527–529, 536–539; Dams/Stolle, pp. 77–84.

73 Borodziej, Terror und Politik, pp. 71–72; Wnuk, NKVD im Einsatz gegen den polnischen Untergrund, pp. 527–528.

74 Pulvermacher, Early Deportations, pp. 126–127, 130.

75 Aleksander Gurjanow: Cztery deportacje 1940–41 [Four Deportations 1940–41], in: Karta (1994), 12, pp. 114–136.

ilies, whom it considered "anti-Soviet elements," in total 140,000 Polish citizens. This was followed in April and May 1940 by the deportation of another 61,000 people—mostly relatives of Polish officers, policemen and prison inmates murdered by the NKVD at Katyn and elsewhere. The deportees were forcibly resettled in Kazakhstan to fill the population gaps caused by the "Great Hunger" in the early 1930s. The third action concerned those Polish citizens, mostly of Jewish origin, who had fled eastward from the German occupied territories and in spring 1940 had opted to return under German occupation. By refusing to accept Soviet citizenship and by registering with the German Resettlement Commission, they had proved to be "unreliable elements" in the eyes of the Soviet authorities. In retrospect, this deportation saved more than 60,000 Polish Jews from certain extermination by the National Socialists.[76] In June 1941, eastern Poland was "cleansed" of another 40,000 politically "unreliable elements" in a fourth deportation action.[77]

The centerpiece of Germany's preventive combat of opponents was the *Intelligenzaktion*. In the context of this operation, the German occupiers murdered over 60,000 Polish citizens, and interned several tens of thousands as "protective detainees" (*Schutzhäftlinge*) in concentration camps. This measure can be illustrated by its implementation in April 1940 in the administrative district of Ciechanów (Regierungsbezirk Zichenau). The arrests were based in particular on denunciations of "ethnic Germans" who, for example, accused their Polish fellow citizens of being "anti-German" or of having attacked or robbed "ethnic Germans." However, a membership in a club or political organization could also be a decisive factor for arrest. The Gestapo applied the category of "intelligentsia" extremely broadly and imprecisely, including young students, farmers, workers and craftsmen.[78] Once the victims had been transferred to the concentration camp, there was hardly any chance for them to regain their freedom before the end of the war. Even proof from the local Gestapo department that there was nothing incriminating the "protective detainee" rarely led to an early release. Rather, at regular intervals of three to six months, "protective custody" (*Schutzhaft*) was automatically extended—often on the grounds that the person in question would join the resistance if released. About half of the Polish citizens arrested in the administrative district of Ciechanów and deported to concentration camps did not survive. The majority of those

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76 PULVERMACHER, Early Deportations, pp. 132–133.

77 GÜNTHER HÄUFELE: Zwangsumsiedlungen in Polen 1939–1941: Zum Vergleich sowjetischer und deutscher Besatzungspolitik, in: DITTMAR DAHLMANN, GERHARD HIRSCHFELD (eds.): Lager, Zwangsarbeit, Vertreibung und Deportation: Dimensionen der Massenverbrechen in der Sowjetunion und in Deutschland 1933 bis 1945, Essen 1999, pp. 515–534, here pp. 525–526.

78 MARCIN PRZEGIĘTKA: Akcja Gestapo przeciwko polskiej inteligencji w rejencji ciechanowskiej: Aresztowani i deportowani do obozów koncentracyjnych w III Rzeszy w kwietniu 1940 roku [The Gestapo Action against the Polish Intelligentsia in the Administrative District of Zichenau: Those Arrested in April 1940 and Deported to Concentration Camps in the Third Reich], Warszawa 2020, pp. 209–213.

who survived remained interned until liberation in April 1945—this meant five years of forced labor under most inhumane conditions. By June 1941 alone, probably more than 44,000 Polish citizens had been sent to German concentration camps.[79]

In contrast to the SiPo, the NKVD attempted to carry out its suppression of real and alleged opponents as inconspicuously as possible. In doing so, it pursued several objectives. The Soviet occupiers were fundamentally concerned with integrating a large part of the population, admittedly on the basis of Soviet ideological principles. This meant that, although far-reaching "purges" of all "socially dangerous elements" were planned, the majority of the population was to integrate more or less voluntarily into the Soviet system. At the same time, the NKVD established a surveillance network that was initially little noticed by the population and the Polish resistance and was therefore completely underestimated. In setting up this surveillance structure, the NKVD also took a much more inclusive approach than the SiPo. Its cadres recruited agents en masse from all strata of the population. In almost every interrogation, NKVD investigating judges tried to persuade arrested persons to cooperate. For racial reasons, but also because of the language barrier, the SiPo initially limited its agent recruitment almost entirely to "ethnic Germans." This approach proved problematic in those territories where the German minority was hardly represented.[80]

The implementation of a close-meshed surveillance network quickly paid off for the NKVD. By intercepting conversations held in public, it succeeded

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79 Cf. PRZEGIĘTKA; IRENA PAJĄK (ed.): Księga Pamięci: Mieszkańcy Śląska, Podbeskidzia, Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego w KL Auschwitza [Book of Remembrance: Inhabitants of Silesia, Beskid Foothills, Dombrowa Basin in the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz], vol. 1, Katowice 1998; FRANCISZEK PIPER (ed.): Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Krakowa i innych miejscowości Polski południowej 1940–1944 [Book of Remembrance: Transports of Poles from Cracow and Other Localities in Southern Poland to the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz 1940–1944], vol. 1, Warszawa 2002; FRANCISZEK PIPER, IRENA STRZELECKA (eds.): Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Lublina i innych miejscowości Lubelszczyzny 1940–1944 [Book of Remembrance: Transports of Poles from Lublin and Other Localities in the Lublin Region to the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz 1940–1944], vol. 1, Oświęcim 2009; FRANCISZEK PIPER (ed.): Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Radomia i innych miejscowosci Kielecczyzny 1940–1944 [Book of Remembrance: Transports of Poles from Radom and Other Localities of the Kielce Region to the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz 1940–1944], vol. 1, Oświęcim 2006; BOHDAN PIĘTKA (ed.): Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Wielkopolski, Pomorza, Ciechanowskiego i Białostocczyzny 1940–1944 [Book of Remembrance: Transports of Poles from Greater Poland, Pomerania, Ciechanów and Białystok to the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz 1940–1944], vol. 1, Oświęcim 2013; FRANCISZEK PIPER (ed.): Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków z Warszawy do KL Auschwitz 1940–1944 [Book of Remembrance: Transports of Poles from Warsaw to the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz 1940–1944], vol. 1, Warszawa 2000.

80 BORODZIEJ, Terror und Politik, pp. 30–31, 51.

in arresting the leader of the Polish Organization for the Struggle for Freedom (Polskiej Organizacji Walki o Wolność, POWW), General Marjan Januszajtis, as early as 27 October 1939. The latter was first interrogated by the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ivan Serov, and then taken to Moscow. There, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, Lavrentii Beriia, questioned Januszajtis several times.[81] A similar procedure on the part of the SiPo—whereby, for example, Himmler or Heydrich personally talked to notable arrested representatives of the Polish underground—is not known. There are also no indications of such a systematic use of the "snowball system" by the SiPo during the first months of the German occupation.

The NKVD also used much more elaborate and perfidious interrogation methods than the SiPo. While the SiPo men were quick to use physical force,[82] the NKVD investigating judges tried to put the interrogated person under psychological pressure and persuade him/her to collaborate with the NKVD. In doing so, they were helped by the fact that the NKVD had large human resources at its disposal, which were used exclusively to process, compare, and analyze the data obtained through the surveillance system as well as in the interrogations. The knowledge gained in this way could in turn be used by the investigating judges to intimidate the interrogated person and convince him/her that the NKVD already knew everything anyway and that denial was therefore pointless. In order to verify the truthfulness of the statements, those arrested were subjected to several long interrogations, in which they were questioned in great detail on the same topics several times. In confrontations with other arrestees from the interrogated person's milieu, confessions made by their comrades were intended to convince the interrogated person to confess as well. If this relatively gentle interrogation method was not successful, the investigating judge put the interrogated person under increasing psychological pressure, for instance by threatening to deport his/her family. If this still did not lead to a confession, the investigating judges finally used physical torture, drawing on an extensive repertoire of extremely sadistic methods.[83]

Another elaborate method of combating the enemy was the infiltration of underground organizations, which was extremely successfully applied by the NKVD in L'viv. This involved infiltrating the structures of the Polish re-

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81 Report of the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, Ivan Serov, to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, regarding the unmasking of a Polish underground organization in Lviv, 1939-10-18, in: VASYL' DANYLENKO, SERHII KOKIN (eds.): Radians'ki orhany derzhavnoi bezpeky u 1939 – chervni 1941 r.: Dokumenty HDA SB Ukrainy [Soviet State Security Organs in the Period from 1939 to June 1941: Documents of the HDA SB of Ukraine], Kyiv 2009, doc. no. 134, pp. 243–247.

82 BORODZIEJ, Terror und Politik, p. 71.

83 WNUK, NKVD im Einsatz gegen den polnischen Untergrund, pp. 527–528; GŁOWACKI, Sowieci wobec Polaków, pp. 287–288.

sistance with agents, who were recruited among arrested members of the ZWZ. Thus, the NKVD obtained information concerning not only the infiltrated organization but also the networks associated with it. In particular, the ZWZ-1 organization in L'viv became an easy target for the NKVD. Many members were completely inexperienced in conspiracy; general rules of secrecy were largely ignored.[84] This development not only exposed the organization to the NKVD's spying methods, but also made it easier for charismatic impostors and opportunists, such as Emil Macieliński, to rise quickly and assume important functions. After his second arrest, Macieliński agreed to work as an agent for the NKVD. In the weeks and months that followed, the NKVD arrested countless members of the ZWZ-1 who had been in contact with Macieliński. Edward Gola played a similar role in ZWZ-2. He too was a charming dazzler who rose to become one of the leading figures of the Lviv underground. He was involved in the central activities of the command staff. On 22 August 1940, he took over the leadership of the intelligence service, which was to prove fatal for the ZWZ 2. Gola had long since been working as an agent for the NKVD at this point. In this way, the NKVD managed to completely infiltrate the two L'viv ZWZ organizations and to gain control over the communication to the ZWZ-bases in Bucharest, Budapest, and Warsaw, as well as to the government in exile in France and later London. This enabled the Soviet secret police to misinform the entire Polish underground as well as its allies. At the same time, the NKVD obtained information that reached far beyond eastern Poland.[85] From the NKVD's point of view, infiltration also had the advantage over dismantling that the Polish underground did not try to establish new structures, as infiltration mostly went unnoticed for quite some time.[86]

Conclusion

Historical comparison is now considered a recognized and fruitful concept in historical scholarship. In the past, the two great totalitarian regimes—Stalinism and National Socialism—have been juxtaposed in integral comparisons as well as via spatially oriented approaches, but only rudimentarily subjected to a valid comparison. An integral approach is problematic because the two regimes emerged at different times in different ways in markedly different contexts and also developed differently. The Soviet Union, the result of a social as well as political revolution and a bloody civil war, had already existed for more than a decade when the Nazis seized power in January 1933. While structures in the Soviet Union had been almost completely rebuilt and elites had been replaced in the course of several waves of terror, the transition from the Weimar Repub-

84 WNUK, NKVD im Einsatz gegen den polnischen Untergrund, pp. 536–539.

85 WNUK, Za pierwszego Sowieta, chapter 2; cf. KÖNIGSBERG/SZYPROWSKI.

86 PIOTR KOŁAKOWSKI: NKWD i GRU na Ziemiach Polskich: 1939–1945 [NKVD and GRU on Polish Soil: 1939–1945], Warszawa 2002, pp. 99–100.

lic to the Nazi regime saw numerous continuities, not least in the police apparatus, where only a part of the personnel had been replaced.

Better suited for a comparison of National Socialism and Stalinism than the regimes themselves are their parallel occupation regimes in Poland from September 1939 to June 1941. In this context, the sectoral comparison is particularly recommended, for which almost ideal conditions arise, as on the basis of their Border and Friendship Treaty, the Soviet Union and the German Reich divided Poland between themselves almost equally. The subject "suppression of opponents" is very well suited for a sectoral comparison, since it does not focus on unprecedented historical phenomena such as the persecution of the kulaks on the Soviet side and the mass murder of the Jews on the German side, but on dictatorship-specific processes of violence. In combating opponents, both occupation regimes faced the same challenges—a Polish underground movement networking across the newly created German-Soviet border.

Altogether, the German suppression of opponents in Poland was much less effective than that of the NKVD. While the NKVD was able to achieve greater success in this area as early as 1939, the German combat of the Polish resistance seems to have been largely limited to untargeted measures. The aimless mass actions and the disproportionate policy of atonement proved counterproductive for the German side. Employing arbitrary and extremely brutal measures, the German occupiers also antagonized those parts of the population that could have been won over to a modus vivendi under a milder regime. Due to their "master race" attitude, however, the German occupiers were not willing to cooperate with the non-German population. Hence, there was no incentive for the latter to act loyally toward the German occupiers.

The majority of the Polish citizens, however, justifiably viewed the Soviet modus vivendi, extremely critically. After all, it was associated with a social revolution, i.e. a complete change not only in the political, but also in the social and economic system. For this reason, the resistance developed most intensively in eastern Poland, but at the same time it was infiltrated most quickly and effectively and used for NKVD interests. Overall, the Soviet occupiers came much closer to their central objective—an alignment of eastern Poland with the social, economic and political system of the Soviet Union—than their German counterpart. This process was interrupted in the summer of 1941 by the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Viewed in a broader temporal framework, a contrasting development of the two occupation regimes can be discerned: in the German case, violence and terror rapidly gained momentum within the period under study and especially from the invasion of the Soviet Union onward, eventually culminating in the mass murder of European Jews, Roma and Sinti, Soviet prisoners of war, partisans, etc. Since the end of the "Great Terror," the Stalinist regime had seen a decline in violence. Until June 1941, the NKVD also committed mass murders in eastern Poland, but to a lesser extent than the German occupiers in the General Government and the territories annexed to the German Reich.

From September 1939 to June 1941, the Soviet occupation in eastern Poland achieved a higher degree of "totality than the German rule.

From September 1939 to June 1941, the Soviet occupation in eastern Poland achieved a higher degree of “totality” than the German rule. The NKVD in eastern Poland succeeded in “cleansing,” penetrating, and atomizing the population of potential political opponents and “unreliable elements” more rapidly than its German counterpart in its occupied territory. While the SiPo employed similar practices, it carried them out in a much more untargeted and ineffective manner. This can be explained by the fact that the NKVD had greater human resources, longer and more extensive experience, and better knowledge of the language and the country. However, the NKVD’s greater professionalism could not prevent its total failure in the face of the German attack in June 1941, caused by Stalin’s misperception. The high degree of centralization, which in many ways contributed to the higher efficiency of the Soviet secret police, was at the same time its Achilles’ heel: The most efficient political police is powerless if the totalitarian dictator at its head is mistaken.

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