

Berlin The Downfall 1945: Author's Cuts

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Chapter 1 - Air Raid Shelters

In air raid shelters and bunkers, the lavatories were in most cases sealed off by the authorities because there were so many cases of people who committed suicide, having locked the door. This detail was not forgotten in the following decade. Curtains were ordered for the lavatories instead of doors when West Berlin's bomb shelters were prepared again for use during the Cold War.

Experience of Bombing

Apartments were particularly cold during that winter of fuel shortages. There was little glass available to repair windows and people opened their windows wide before going down into the cellars in the hope of saving any remaining panes from bomb blast.

Anyone who used a torch when finding their way into the bunker would provoke cries of 'Put that light out!' 'Licht aus!' [Kardorff, p.153.] Someone goes into hysterics.

During air raids, the low wattage bulbs dimmed still further, then came back. Children screamed. Many admitted to a curious exhilaration when they found themselves still alive when it was over.

Some people stayed in the cellars even after the all clear sounded. It was warmer and less threatening there.

After being bombed 'Goebbels says now we only have light luggage' 'leichtes Gepäck'. [Kardorff, p.159]

Other Examples of Berlin Humour

A joke of the previous year recorded by Klemperer. May 1944. 'What is cowardice? When someone in Berlin volunteers for the Eastern Front'. [Klemperer, 4.5.44, p.383]

Arrows pointing to an air raid shelter were accompanied by the initials LSR, or Luftschutzraum. These were said to stand for 'Lernt schnell Russisch': 'learn Russian quickly'. [Klemperer, 4.9.44, p.431]

Another joke savaged the Nazi cult of sacrifice. A man is dug out after being buried in rubble for two days. His wife and children are dead and he himself has lost his left arm, a leg and an eye. But he raises his remaining right arm in salute and says: 'Heil Hitler! Danzig is German, and that's the main thing'. ['Heil, Hitler! Hauptsache, Danzig ist deutsch', [Kardorff, p.95]

Food Shortages

Following the Roman tradition of bread and circuses, the Nazi administration organized an ice show in the bomb-damaged Sportpalast to distract people from the shortage of rations. Films were constantly interrupted

by the early evening bombing raid.

The Deutches Frauenwerk of Gaustelle Berlin (Berlin-Schöneberg Hauptstr. 19) produced bakery booklets and and brochures on saving food. One was entitled 'main meal without meat' - 'Hauptgerichte einmal ohne Fleisch'. [BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61A/11] This no doubt produced another joke of how to produce a main meal without food.

Various

The Nazi Volksofper, like in the winter of 1941, called on Germans to give winter clothing to troops.

Civilian hospitals were to be designated by a red square, as opposed to a red cross, on a white background. This information was passed to the British and American governments via the German embassy in Switzerland. But this rather belated appeal to Article 27 of the Hague convention appears to have been more inspired more for propaganda than humanitarian reasons. [HUA-CD 2600 Charité Dir. 421-24/1 Bd x, p.125]

July Plot

Operation Foxley, SOE's contingency plan to kill Hitler, provoked mixed feelings in British government circles. It was rejected partly because the chiefs of staff felt that it was better to have an increasingly erratic Hitler misdirecting the German war effort.

'The chiefs of staff were unanimous that, from the strictly military point of view, it was almost an advantage that Hitler should remain in control of German strategy, having regard to the blunders that he has made, but that on the wider point of view, the sooner he was got out of the way the better.' PRO HS 6/623 p. 62

Churchill believed, however, that Germany had to be beaten on the field of battle to avoid further stab-in-the-back myths in the future. Such a perspective never appears to have occurred to the July plotters. PRO HS 6/625 and Churchill's speech in House of Commons 2 August 1944.

Various

The 'Promi', was Berlin slang for the Propaganda-Ministerium, which itself was short for das Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.

Klemperer's observations in his diary indicate that German workers were much more robust in their

contempt of the Nazis. The middle class was afraid of losing everything. A Berliner workman on a tram offered his seat to an elderly Jewish women. And when a Nazi Party member protested, he retorted: 'Üba meene Arsch verfüje ick alleene'.

The 12 January was Goering's fifty-second birthday, and Hitler conveyed his very best wishes. It was also the day that the Red Army began its most devastating campaign of the war.

Chapter 2

The Red Army also had far more heavy weapons - 107,300 guns and mortars, 12,100 tanks and self-propelled guns and 14,700 aircraft.

Germans had 3.7 million, and just 1.9 million in the west. 4,100 aircraft, 56,200 guns and mortars, 8,100 tanks and self-propelled guns [VOV, p.230]

Soviet officers were clearly impressed by the observations of a German officer whom they had captured at this time. He readily acknowledged that the great strength of Red Army infantry was its constant reconnaissance. On the other hand, he felt that there was little discipline. 'Junior officers are so inexperienced that they have no idea what to do without direct orders from their superiors.' The Red Army artillery was indeed strong, but 'Red Army aviation drops its bombs without taking any aim at all'. Soviet army officers no doubt agreed strongly with the last point, since so many of them had direct experience of it. Stalin, however, regarded it as a perfectly normal occurrence in warfare. When Averell Harriman, the American ambassador, apologised for an attack by US aircraft on a Red Army column in Yugoslavia, Stalin brushed it aside as of no consequence, replying that such incidents always happened in time of war. 'Junior officers. . .', Grossman papers RGALI 1710/3/47, p.1

Harriman and Stalin, NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Rokossovsky's 2nd Belorussian Front was to attack East Prussia from the south and head north westwards towards the Baltic coast around Danzig, the 3rd Belorussian Front, commanded by the brilliant young General Chernyakhovsky was ordered to attack from the east towards Königsberg, even though this meant throwing his armies against heavy German defence works. These two fronts mustered 1,670,000 men with 28,360 guns and heavy mortars and 3,300 tanks.

Marshal Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front in the centre extended along the Vistula from just north of Warsaw. It occupied two vital bridgeheads on the west bank of the river. The main blow was to be delivered by six armies from the Magnuszev bridgehead. Another two armies with two tank corps would attack out of the Pulawy bridgehead. A third, but lesser, blow was to be delivered north of Warsaw to encircle the city. Zhukov allocated rifle divisions to break the most strongly defended sections. He regarded this sacrifice of infantry as well worthwhile. The tank armies were needed for a rapid breakout to prevent the Germans from falling back to further lines of defence.

The idea was to let the tank armies loose on the German rear areas on the second or third day of the operation. Zhukov told his tank army commanders that once they were through the enemy, they were to advance deeply and not worry about losing contact with the infantry. They would receive full support from Red Army aviation formations. Their objective was to charge ahead, first to Poznan, and then to the river

Oder opposite Berlin. Zhukov also reassured General Berzarin of the 5th Shock Army, a great chain-smoking bear of a man, that he could guarantee two hundred percent success.

The forces of the 1st Belorussian Front and the 1st Ukrainian Front lining up against the German front line along the Vistula were not simply superior, they were overwhelming, with two and a quarter million men, over 32,000 guns and heavy mortars and nearly 6,500 tanks. General Seidermann's estimate of 8,000 Soviet aircraft for both the Vistula and East Prussian fronts proved remarkably accurate. Gehlen, however, had in fact underestimated the concentrations in the main bridgeheads. This was partly because the Red Army had masked the arrival on the west bank of the tank armies, but also because Konev's use of deception, maskirovka, in creating a fake tank army to the south, had helped to divert German attention from the centre. This ruse involved the use of dummy vehicles and weapons - 400 tanks, 500 trucks and 1,000 field guns.

Strengths: Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, pp.447-449. The official Soviet history puts the figures slightly higher: 2.5 million men, 33,500 guns and mortars, and over 7,000 tanks and self-propelled guns. IVMV, p. 59. maskirovka, see Colonel van Nes and Colonel David Glantz in *AWS*, pp. 490-511 dummy vehicles, Konev, p.12

On 12 January, the Vistula offensive began at 5 a.m. Moscow time, with the 1st Ukrainian Front attacking out of the Sandomierz bridgehead. The snow was quite heavy and visibility almost nil. The artillery fire-plan started with strong counter-battery fire as front-line battalions started their reconnaissance in force.

To trick the Germans, Konev had changed standard Red Army practice. The probing attacks usually took place on the day before a major assault. This time, the breakthrough artillery divisions were waiting and ready for word from the infantry. Penal or shtraf companies, led the attack, suffering the heaviest casualties. When the advanced rifle battalions breached the first line of enemy defences and reported back that the Germans had not withdrawn from the second line, a terrifyingly intensive bombardment was unleashed at ten o'clock. It lasted an hour and forty-seven minutes. The experience was such that German prisoners later estimated that it had gone on for five hours. Many were sent crazy, and large numbers 'lost all self-possession' and abandoned their positions. Fire plan, *Peredel'sky. G and Khoroshilov.G: 'Artilleriya v srazheniyakh ot Visly do Odera'*, *VIZh*, 1985, No.1 'lost all self-possession', Konev, p.19

More seriously for the Germans, the promise made by officers that panzer troops would come to their assistance very rapidly, was impossible to fulfil. Hitler's order to push forward the armoured reserves had forced General Harpe to move most of General Nehring's XXIV Panzer Corps to just behind the front. This brought the 16th Panzer Division in particular within range of the Soviet heavy artillery. These armoured formations were severely damaged before the battle even started.

Unlike Zhukov, Konev had always planned to throw in his main armoured forces, the 3rd Guards Tank Army and the 4th Guards Tank Army, on the first morning.

Saturday 13 January. After lunch Martin Borman with his wife and children visited Rheinhalle to see a mushroom farm of the gardener Volmark. In the evening Martin Borman had a conversation with Party Comrade Treich. In the morning, Bolsheviks started their advance.

Sunday 14 January. Visit to Aunt Hesken. Bormann diary, GARF 9401/2/97 pp.32-48

Before Konev could send his two tank armies westwards, they first had to deal with the remnants of the 16th and the 17th Panzer Divisions, which had been out of radio contact for most of the day. The 17th Panzer Division was unusually strong for that stage of the war. It had 210 tanks. But the shortage of experienced crews meant that a quarter of them became casualties on the first day when Soviet tanks charged them. The division's headquarters was effectively destroyed. Their commander, Colonel Brux, was wounded and captured along with other officers and soldiers from the headquarters. Individual regiments, both panzer and panzergrenadier, acting on their own initiative, then broke out northwards to join up with the remains of the 16th Panzer Division. Major Krebs, staff officer 17th Pz.Div. and Colonel Liebisch, AWS, p.613

Another headquarters caught unawares by Soviet tanks was that of General Recknagel's XLII Corps. According to the official Russian history, 'Lelyushenko's [4th Guards Tank] Army destroyed the headquarters of the corps and captured the chief of staff, and Polish partisans captured the commander, General Hermann Recknagel'. No mention is made of his immediate death, presumably execution out of hand, but whether Soviet troops or 'Polish partisans' were responsible is left far from clear. No less than eight divisional or corps commanders on the Vistula lost their lives. Two or three of them may well have committed suicide, but such a death-rate among generals is unusually high. 'Lelyushenko's. . .', VOV iii, p. 238; death of Recknagel and Gens. Bloch, Finger, Hirschfeld, Honn, Kirchbach, Nickel and Rein; see Bezborodova, TsKhIDK, GUPVI central file.

It took much longer for the 1st Guards Tank Army on the left to break through. Its commander General Katukov paced impatiently up and down in at the headquarters of Chuikov's 8th Guards Army. General Vassili Chuikov, the tough commander of an army which he had led right through the battle of Stalingrad and from there to the Vistula, was using every threat at his disposal to force his men forward to capture the Pilica crossings. The last line of enemy resistance along a railway embankment was blasted with a regiment of Katyusha rocket launchers. The 1st Guards Tank Army was let off its leash even though infantry had not managed to secure crossings over the Pilica.

These early breakthroughs, in Zhukov's words, 'saved thousands of tons of shells, which came in very useful later on'. 'saved thousands of tons. . .', Zhukov, p.190

The next twenty-four hours proved that the Soviet armies which had broken through the Vistula front were indeed advancing at full speed. Each seemed to outbid the other. 'In just one day [16 January]', wrote Bokov, the chief political officer of Berzarin's 5th Shock Army, 'our army advanced by 30 kilometres and liberated more than two hundred villages and towns.' That same morning Berzarin and Bokov had been to the headquarters of 2nd Guards Tank Army 'to discuss our further co-operation in pursuing the enemy'. Bogdanov, the commander of the 2nd Guards Tank Army, greeted us warmly. General Berzarin and I wished them success and said goodbye. "See you on the Oder, and perhaps in Berlin".

'In just one day. . .', Bokov, F.: 'Nastuplenie 5-i Udarnoi Armii s Magnushevskovo Olatsdarma', VIZh, 1974, No.1

In the town of Geraduv, German rear echelon soldiers hurriedly constructed anti-tank obstacles, with artillery

and Panzerfausts covering the approaches. Industrial buildings and houses were turned into defensive positions. But once again the 44th Guards Tank Brigade's momentum was too much for the demoralised defenders. By the evening their tanks were in the town and managed to stop the Germans fleeing by rail. They also seized eight wagons full of military equipment and industrial machinery removed from local factories. Geraduv, TsAMO 307/246791/9 p.136

Enemy resistance was smashed by eight that evening, but far from allowing the brigade a rest, the corps commander ordered them by radio to push on to the airfield near Sochaczew immediately. Their objective, they heard, was defended by the 391st Security Division. By early the next morning, 17 January, they were fighting on the southern outskirts of town. It was still dark. The airfield did not appear nearly so heavily defended as they had feared. They faced an infantry company, eight anti-aircraft guns and a composite group.

Just before dawn, the tanks approached the airfield. Kravchenko, the company commander, gave his officers their orders, even before the final reconnaissance had been completed. Suddenly, they heard aircraft engines starting up. He decided to attack immediately. The Germans would not hear their tanks due to the noise. They formed an arrow-head formation with his tank in the lead and charged. As he had hoped, the Germans did not hear them. The tanks smashed through the perimeter fence - somehow the sub-machine gunners clinging to the backs of the T-34s managed to hang on - and the tanks broke onto the airfield. Once again they fired and rammed, despite the fear of being engulfed in a fireball if the aircraft exploded.

Finally, the German defence detachments realised what was happening and opened fire with one of the 88mm anti-aircraft guns. Kravchenko ordered Junior Lieutenant Korsakov to destroy it. Korsakov's T-34 thundered forward towards the position, zigzagging at top speed, and rammed the position. One gun was crushed under his tracks, (an image beloved of Soviet propaganda), and Korsakov shot down the members of the guncrew who were trying to hide behind heaps of snow shovelled off runway. Twenty aircraft are said to have been destroyed (perhaps a slight exaggeration since the official accounts always go for suspiciously round figures) and the airfield would be ready for use by the 402nd Fighter Regiment within twenty-four hours. The rest of the brigade had meanwhile secured the town and rail junction. Warsaw was cut off. On that evening of 17 January, the official report concluded, 'the whole world learned the news that the capital of Poland, Warsaw was liberated.' Kravchenko and Korsakov and 'the whole world. . .', TsAMO 307/4155/34 p.138.

And they guessed how few panzer divisions there were left to cope with the mass onslaught of Soviet tanks which seemed to charge around all over the place. The German Panther could destroy a T-34 with ease. When faced with a heavy Stalin tank, the crew aimed at the hull just above the tracks. Russian tank and anti-tank gunners, on the other hand, aimed high. They laid onto the turret. As a result, German tank crews had returned to the former habit of attaching their spare track links to the side of the turret as extra protection even though it was expressly forbidden by the Inspector General of Panzer Troops. But however good the equipment, when you were facing the attack of a whole Guards Tank Army, even the heavy Tiger tanks stood little chance. And now the Red Army, in response to the King Tiger, had regiments of giant Stalin tanks with 122mm guns.

Marshal Konev's artillery commander, Lieutenant General N.N.Simeonov, had brought forward his thousands of guns. The advance of artillery onto bridgeheads strictly regulated under cover of darkness strictly controlled by the komendant service. Good control of artillery by concentration, but vulnerability to air attack, so artillery carefully guarded by anti-aircraft batteries.

Over 37,000 guns, mortars and anti-aircraft artillery. The 'operative density' higher than all previous offensives with the exception of the Kiev operation of 1943. On the sector of 8th Guards Army 350 guns per kilometre, 95% were 76mm calibre and more. Tactical densities even higher. Anti-aircraft, highest density on sector of 3rd Guards Army.

On 1st Ukrainian Front breakthrough zones, artillery action started with fire which lasted from seven to twenty-five minutes, then at five am, in complete darkness, the leading battalions began their fighting recce. Their attack was supported by the PSO method. By seven to eight am they had driven a wedge into the enemy's defence to the distance of 600 to 700 metres. By 10 am, some leading battalions had advanced up to three kilometres. This allowed cdrs to define more precisely the main strongpoints, and fire positions of the enemy artillery and to make corrections in fire plan.

At ten am the 107 minute artillery preparation started for the attack of the main forces. The first fifteen minute 'rolling of fire', covered the whole depth of the enemy's tactical defence. Then for forty minutes, the artillery performed a methodical destruction and suppression of front line objects, using direct fire. Then counter-battery fire for seven minutes and fire control and observation posts. Then 13 minutes at specified targets. Then a final fifteen minute rolling of fire.

1st Ukrainian Front counter-battery rapid fire for seven minutes. Had ranged in beforehand with a single gun from each battery, trying to look like random fire. The control of ranging had been carried out on the eve of the operation. Colonel General V.I. Kazakov, was the commander of 1st Belorussian Front artillery and Lieutenant General N.N. Simeonov in the 1st Ukrainian Front. 1st Ukrainian Front artillery groups had very strong regimental groups, each of them consisted of 9-10 batteries. This provided a lot of support for deep breakthrough. But they became unwieldy and difficult to manage. Very detailed artillery reconnaissance [p.31] plan advance of artillery.

Twenty-five minute fire from all artillery in front line. 1st Belorussian Front. Suppression of targets up 8 kilometres behind front line. After start of advance, 60 minutes artillery support of attack, using a single wave of fire. If regiments captured their objective rapidly, artillery fire ceased and main assault introduced.

Three all-arms armies followed by the two tank armies would then smash through the breaches. The 8th Guards Army, still led by General Vassily Chuikov who had commanded it at Stalingrad when it had been the 62nd Army, was to work with the 1st Guards Tank Army, while General Berzarin's 5th Shock Army linked with the 2nd Guards Tank Army. Berzarin, an amiable bear of a man on most occasions, smoked even more hungrily than usual during the last minute checks and preparations. There was a distinct rivalry between him and Chuikov, largely because Berzarin was a close friend of Zhukov, while Chuikov resented his commander in chief strongly.

Because the German Divisions were so weak, and could not defend the whole front, only Stutzpunkt defences were in place. There were hardly any reserves. Only two weakened Panzer Divisions.

Warsaw. Zhukov and the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front also visited the city. They too were horrified by what they saw. The Germans had tried to raze the city block by block.

Bormann diary.

Sunday 21 January, Berlin. 1300. MB with Terboven were reporting to the Führer. After that a conversation with Lammers. At 1500, the Führer, Lammers, MB and Terboven received Quisling. In the evening at the Fegeleins with my wife. GARF 9401/2/97 pp.32-48

'Military luck does not exist' motto 65th Army. [RGALI 1710/3/47 p.19]

'You are never master of your own fate' was a saying among Red Army soldiers and 'friendship has nothing to do with duty'. [RGALI 1710/3/47 p.23]

On that morning, 14 January, a thin layer of snow covered the ground and dense mist lasted until noon. At 8.30 a.m., Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front opened up with 25 minutes of 'rolling fire' as the advanced rifle battalions crept forward under its cover. To give an idea of its intensity, Zhukov's artillery was allocated for the day 315,000 artillery and mortar rounds weighing a total 5,450 tons. This figure included 825 tons of Katyusha rockets, the 'Stalin organ' which the German infantry so dreaded.

Chapter 3

'On the morale of German people and facts of unworthy behaviour of officers and soldiers of the Red Army. We studied the morale of the German population remaining in our rear areas using our agents who work among prisoners by infiltration[i.e. stool pigeons] and as a result of interrogations. The majority of Germans regard the arrest of members of fascist organisations and the total mobilization of the population fit for work as the Red Army's revenge for the evil deeds of Germans during the occupation of Soviet territory.

There are openly negative sayings, some of which are the result of unworthy behaviour of some soldiers and officers of the Red Army who have raped German women. Resident of the town of Granz, a German Wilhelm Schedereiter declared at the filtration office that on the night of 12 February, several soldiers broke into his apartment and started to rape all the women present. His daughter Gertrude who was raped repeatedly stated that Germans in the rear of the Red Army would suffer starvation and epidemics and face repression by NKVD troops who would soon arrive. The German Ernst Horling (b.1907) said that on 8 February his wife was raped by a group of soldiers and officers of the Red Army, that earlier he had not believed German propaganda but it had now been proved accurate by what Red Army soldiers were doing towards the German population. [GARF 9401/2/94 p.85]

Although army commanders did not necessarily encourage rape and plunder, there certainly seem to have been cases of officers lower down the chain who did. Pavel Kochlov from the district of Omsk, told his

German captors that their battalion commander told them that 'once across the German frontier, everything was allowed, looting and raping women'. 'once across. . .', KA-FU Öll vol. 35 'beim Überschreiten der deutschen Grenze, daß nun alles erlaubt sei, zu plündern und Frauen zu vergewaltigen.'

The crime of gang-rape appears to have continued to be significantly more prevalent in the Soviet Union than in any western country. At around the time of the collapse of Communism, the Ministry of Internal Affairs revealed that as many as one quarter of all rape cases in 1988 were gang rapes. rape cases in 1988, Yuri Polyakov, quoted Kon, Sex and Russian Society, p.29

It is no surprise that so little was done to protect the civilian population when one considers Beria's own taste for having young women kidnapped off the street in Moscow for his pleasure, or Stalin's attitude that rape by Red Army soldiers constituted no more than having a little bit of hard-earned 'fun with a woman'. NKVD troops, in theory acting as military police, never intervened unless their interests were directly affected. Solzhenitsyn recounts how a group of drunken Soviet tank officers broke into a bath house and chased one attractive young woman. They were rapidly arrested and stripped of their badges of rank. It turned out that they had unwisely chosen the 'campaign wife' of the SMERSH chief with the 48th Army. 'fun with a woman', Djilas, p.111; SMERSH 48th Army, Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, i, p.21

Feelings of Red Army in East Prussia

Now that we are in Germany, we sometimes come across columns of Fritzes, with knapsacks on their shoulders, and looking as if somebody had beaten them. Let them feel for themselves how nice it is. Sometimes we come across some of 'ours' returning to the Motherland. You recognise them immediately and you can't help comparing 41 with 45.' Gerasimova quoted, Sinyavskaya, p.273

Former medical instructor Sofia Kuntsevich: 'I thought that when we reached German territory we would not feel mercy towards anyone. How much hatred had accumulated in my chest. Why should I feel pity yet I, who had sworn that I hated them all, collected from our men all that was left from their rations, any tiny bit of sugar left, and gave it to the German children. Of course, I had not forgotten anything, but I could not look the hungry children in the eye.' [Sinyavskaya, p.274]

'This is a kulak agriculture based on the exploitation of labour', wrote the political department of the 19th Army. 'That is why everything looks nice and rich. And when our Red Army soldier, particularly one who is immature in the political sense with a petty bourgeois private ownership view, compares involuntarily a collective farm with a German farm, he praises the German farm. We even have some officers who admire German things.' 'This is a kulak. . .', TsAMO 372/6570/78 pp. 30-32 quoted Sinyavskaya pp199-203.

Red Army discipline

'All these rapes diminish the dignity of the army and of every Russian,' Senior Lieutenant Safonov said to his friend Inozemtsev. 'This is also bound to destroy discipline and reduce the fighting capacity of the army. It is going to be exceptionally hard to control all these animal instincts which have got out of hand.'

Inozemtsev fully agreed. 'The formula', he wrote later, 'which was casually thrown out by Ehrenburg to leave it all to the consciousness of the soldier later asked a great deal of officers to bring it back under control.' 'All these rapes. . .', Inozemtsev, p.191

There were numberless cases of chronic alcoholism, including a SMERSH officer with the 33rd Army 'who had been systematically drunk from October to December 1944'. When his battalion was advancing in February, 'he wandered around lost for one and a half months and when he finally found his regiment again, this representative of SMERSH started drinking again. The Party commission tried to sort him out, but because he recognized his guilt with all his heart, his punishment was limited to a strict reprimand.' The scales of Soviet justice were indeed unique. 'who had been systematically. . .', TsAMO 233/2374/92 p. 318

Refugees

When the Swiss embassy offered to take 500 German children, Nazi officials wanting to turn this into a propaganda coup, decided to choose those 'whose parents had been murdered by the bolsheviks'. The offer was turned down on the Führer's orders with the argument that 'also on Swiss territory and with it the whole Swiss population would not be safe in the case of an eventual Bolshevik victory'. 'deren Eltern von Bolschewisten ermordet worden sind'. 31 January BA-B R55/616 p.160. 'auch der schweizer Boden und damit die schweizer Bevölkerung bei einem evtl. Siegen des Bolschewismus nicht sicher sei.' 28 February BA-B R55/616 p.241

Schweidnitz, with a population of 125,000 inhabitants had to take 197,000 refugees.

30,000 refugees were sent to Denmark but 'keine Garantie für die Flüchtlinge übernehmen könne'. In area of Hirschberg in Lower Saxony half a million refugees were stuck because railway system come to a halt for everything except Wehrmacht use. They included 2,100 heavily pregnant women. (Evacuated by train to Karlsbad). 15 February BA-B R55/616 p.185

Another 1.2 million stuck in area of Görlitz. Dresden raid. half a million homeless to add to refugee problem, but Allies missed the Wehrmacht store depot.

Severe problem of fodder because the trekkers, the vast majority from agricultural areas, had brought so many horses with them. In one district near Halle they found that the 10,000 refugees had brought 6,000 horses with them. Many were slaughtered for food.

East Prussia 1,635,000. Danzig and West Prussia 489,000; Pomerania 400,000; Wartheland 923,000; Lower Silesia 2,955,000; Upper Silesia 745,000; Mark Brandenburg 212,000; other areas 1,000,000. Total 8.350 million.

19 February BA-B R55/616 p.211

60,000 refugees in Pillau with up to another 20,000 a day joining them over the ice from the Heilsberger pocket and Königsberg.

Using Kriegsmarine communications, Gauleiter Erich Koch signalled Goebbels in Berlin on 12 February asking for another 50,000 loaves and 20,000 cans of condensed milk 'infolge grossen Zustromes von Flüchtlingen über das Eis des Haffes'. 12 February BA-B R55/616 p.188

Corpses thrown from freezing train. Mothers holding on to dead babies refusing to believe that they were no longer alive. On roads, columns of refugees stranded, often without food for themselves or fodder for their animals.

As late as 10 February 'Lage in der Evakuierung', Nazi officials finally realised that with 800,000 civilians still to be rescued, and with trains and ships taking an average of a thousand people each: 'Es stehen weder genügend Schiffe, noch Eisenbahnwagen oder Fuhrwerke zur Verfügung'. 'There are neither enough ships, rolling stock or vehicles at our disposal'. Issuing estimates and orders which bore little relation to the reality on the ground. 10 February BA-B R55/616 p.172

In Pomerania. crisis of fodder for horses.

Danzig On 21 February alone 51,000 got out. Estimated only 150,000 left to evacuate, but a week later Nazi officials realised that there were still 250,000 women and children to evacuate. Danzig now had a population of 1.2 million, of whom 530,000 were refugees.

Thaw meant that ice of Frisches Haff could only be crossed on foot, and not by cart. Hamburg to Gotenhafen took 6 to 8 days by sea because of danger from mines.

From 29 January to 19 February inclusive 305,941 evacuated from Königsberg and Pillau. And including Danzig, the total arrived at 450,000 by sea if one adds in ships from Gotenhafen.

Propaganda

The instruction sheet 'Material für Propagandisten Nr. 25' claimed that the Red Army made 93 German officers lie down and crushed them to death with a T-34 tank because they refused to join 'dem Verräter Seydlitz'. 16.1.45, BA-B R55/793 p.7

East Prussia

Elbing. Slaughter of cattle. Lieutenant caught a heifer. One of the sailors speared her to death. 'Our own cook served the supper: fried liver, potato soup with meat and veal steak.' Marine infantry from the Baltic Fleet. Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17

Elbing shipyard. Announcements in six languages for foreign workers. Mass lavatory in centre of yard covered by some coarse planks. 'Nur fur Auslander'. Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17

Auschwitz

Among the 3,000 found alive were Olga Dyachenko, a student from Kharkov, a Czech woman from Lidice and a Frenchwoman, Madeleine Motte. Most of them had been too weak to be marched off.

Liberation of Auschwitz 27 January

Report by Shikin, the deputy chief of the Main political department of the Red Army 9 February

Report of 9 February re Oswenczim. A Free French officer: 'I saw with my own eyes the convoys brought to the camp. People were deceived at first by the illusion of order and music playing. But soon they smelt the dead bodies and when prisoners were separated according to their physical state, they soon guessed.' Another Frenchman, a surgeon, described the place as 'more terrible than Maidanek'. The Russians found the others.

Details of Auschwitz complex published on 9 February in the Red Army newspaper, Stalinskoe Znamya, (Stalin's Banner). The photographs showed bundles of human hair, numbers tattooed on arms and living skeletons lifted by Soviet medical workers. RGASPI 17/125/323 pp.1-4

But no details were published until the official Soviet report came out on 8 May. Spectacles, artificial limbs. 7,000 prisoners. Evacuation of the camp had started nine days before. Red Army soldiers swore not to take any prisoners

In the meantime the Ninth Army had been so badly smashed that General Busse had pulled his headquarters back to Frankfurt on the Oder. Eismann knew Busse well, having served directly under him on Field Marshal von Manstein's staff in southern Russia. He also knew the chief of staff of the Second Army to the north. They had worked closely together during the withdrawal from the Dneiper to Bessarabia.

Silesia

The Hindenburg Hitler-Jugend detachment commanded by Bannführer Cording on 24 January Reichsautobahn Hindenburg-Gleiwitz facing attack by eight Soviet armoured vehicles attacking through the pine forest.

Freezing cold. 'Die Jungen sind von einer unbestimmbaren Spannung erfüllt. Sie denken nicht an das, was sein wird oder sein könnte, sie sehen nur den Feind vor sich.' They think only that they must 'ihr Leben um den höchsten Preis zu verkaufen.' Propaganda clichés and yet for many of that indoctrinated generation of German youth, these emotions were real. Defending autobahn embankment. Panzerfausts. T-34s. Most were killed on the autobahn, but Cording and Oberkameradschaftsführer Steller pulled back to a house by the road, and went up into the loft. Cording killed by a shell. counter-attack. Report by SS Kriegsberichter Herbert BA-B R55/620.

Chapter 4 Volkssturm

The system, thanks to the rival satrapies within the National Socialist empire, was ridiculously cumbersome. The Volkssturm was commanded by Nazi Party Gauleiters under Bormann until the moment Reichsführer SS Himmler, the commander of the Replacement Army, on application from the Wehrmacht, ordered their deployment under Wehrmacht command. Battalions were organised according to Nazi Party districts, but 'owing to the peculiarities of the Party organization', companies and battalions varied enormously in size. There were also four different call-up categories, depending on how essential the work of a Volkssturm member was.

A desperate shortage of weapons, immeasurably worsened by the disaster on the Vistula, was disregarded. The Party was so obsessed with the propaganda value of the Volkssturm that it insisted that all units should receive some arms, even if only a handful. This meant that hardly a single unit ended up with proper equipment or training. Needless to say, the Party Chancellery blamed the Wehrmacht at a time when front line formations needed 300,000 new rifles a month when only 200,000 were being produced. Plans were advanced for a 'Volksgewehr' or 'People's Rifle'. Speer's ministry of armaments production claimed that this could be produced without reducing output for the Wehrmacht, but army officers were openly disbelieving. 'Volksgewehr', NA RG338, B-627

The German army also had to contend with Gauleiters interfering with arms and munition production within their Gaus, or party regions. One Gauleiter issued Italian weapons for which there was no ammunition, and then ordered local ammunition factories to switch to making Italian calibre bullets and cease production for Wehrmacht weapons. Other Gauleiters, to the army's horror, even ordered armament factories to hand over weapons destined for the front. These, however, were fairly exceptional cases. The bulk of the Volkssturm could expect little better than superannuated weapons captured early in the war - such as French and Yugoslav rifles or Russian fieldguns. These were distributed from depots, but the right ammunition was in very short supply, often as little as five rounds per rifle.

The Gau system of the Nazi Party meant huge disparities in strength, with companies ranging in strength from just twenty men out in the countryside up to 266 men in Berlin itself. In Brandenburg, one of the most directly threatened Gaus, the platoons sometimes mustered only nine men. BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61B/13

Chaos. List of Kommandierenden Dienststellen of Wehrmacht headquarters overrun by Red Army crossed out on list. Replacement list has a large number of question marks against whereabouts or existence of formation headquarters. BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61A/11

Lodz

Chuikov did not know that General von Saucken, spotting the danger of encirclement from 1st Guards Tank Army, had pulled his Grossdeutschland Corps out of the city of Lodz to withdraw to the south-west. The Grossdeutschland, which had been so arbitrarily transferred by Hitler from East Prussia, had come under fire even as it detrained. Its fighting withdrawal to the Silesian border became similar to that of General Nehring's group. 'Every time we broke out of one encirclement,' said a captured corporal from the 'Hermann Goering' Division which formed part of the corps, 'we fell into another one.' 'Every time we broke. . .', TsAMO 236/2675/339 p.65

Eva Braun and Fegelein

Freytag von Loringhoven was not the only visiting officer from OKH who had never heard of Eva Braun. Colonel de Maizière had also never heard of her. Had been in bunker fifteen times. Only heard as a prisoner of war that she had been there and that Hitler had married her. Below and other adjutants never talked of it.

Fegelein a 'gräsliche Prolet', tried to get involved in anything. Interrupt conversations with generals. Very unpleasant. 'Despite all this I asked him for a favour, a friend of mine who had been Oberstleutnant Siebert, was in danger after July Plot, but I knew that he was not really connected to Stauffenberg, and knowing that he was in Gestapo headquarters in Prinz Albrechtstrasse, I mustered all my courage, and went to Fegelein and said that I did not think that he had any connection with the plot'. If he could not do anything, at least find out what he was accused of. Fegelein acted on this favour. 'He was very powerful, and he was listened to. Siebert, a staff officer, had given the 'sogennate Waffengenerale' (heads of arms) a briefing and had been very frank about the very dark situation in the summer of 1944. One of the Waffengenerale had denounced him to the Gestapo. This was before 20 July. Fegelein got him out. He was removed from generalstaff, but nothing happened to him. Freytag von Loringhoven, 4 October 1999

Stalin from Beria 7 March

Lieutenant General von Kurski, commander of 110 Infantry Division captured at Minsk, provided an appreciation of the situation for the Red Army. The only possible line of defence was the Oder-Neisse line. If spring comes early, the Oder is a defence line which should not be underestimated. The Neisse is not a serious obstacle.

'A simple calculation shows that the length of the Oder-Neisse line from Stettin to Görlitz is 300 kms. At least twenty divisions are needed. Also six divisions will be needed for four of the most important cities – Berlin, Görlitz, Ostrava and Bratislava. Half of the divisions should be panzer divisions as a reserve. It is doubtful that such a number can be deployed when needed. The only hope for the Germans is to withdraw from Baltic and from Italy. 'To shock the military potential and the defence of Germany, the capture of its capital, Berlin, will have a great physical and moral effect. . . The quickest possible termination of the war will be impeded by England's desire to take possession of the North Sea coast.' [GARF 9401/2/93 p.325-333]

Secret weapons. 'Prisoners say that the Germans have a rifle with thirty rounds which makes a tiny hole

[in a tank] and the whole crew is killed.' Grossman papers RGALI 1710/3/51 p.237

Posen

A Red Army regimental commander complains: We broke into one of the streets and civilians ran up to crying that we were their liberators, then the Germans counter-attacked and threw us back. We then brought up a self-propelled gun and when I saw the same people come out and hug the Germans, well, I gave the order to fire with canister.' [RGALI 1710/3/51 p.228]

Schwerin

A stationary shop. A fat old Nazi on the day of his ruin. In the morning a small girl came to his shop and asked him to show her the postcards he had. The fat, taciturn old man, breathing heavily, put a dozen postcards on the counter in front of her. The girl was choosing with great care. After a long time she chose a postcard showing a little girl wearing a beautiful dress standing near a broken egg from which a chick is emerging. The old man took 25 pfennigs from her and put them in his cashbox. That evening he was lying dead in his bed, having taken poison. They put seals on the door, but nice, noisy fellows were taking boxes of goods and packs of household items from his shop.

RGALI 1710/3/51 p.231

Bormann Diary

Saturday 10 February. Lunch at the Fegeleins' with Reichsführer SS Himmler and General Burgdorf. After lunch conversation with Himmler then with Lammers. Supper with Himmler, Sepp Dietrich, Berger and Fegelein. After supper conversation.

Sunday 11 February. In the morning MB had a conversation with Kaltenbrunner. Monday 12 February. The same.

Chats with Himmler lunch and dinner, then goes behind his back with Kaltenbrunner. [Bormann claims that he always sees the Führer at noon.]

Oder

Sachsenhausen just north of Oranienburg

Order of 26 i 45

Am Sonntag, dem 28.1.45, 12.30 Uhr, findet eine feierliche Vereidigung zweier Volkssturm-Kompanien in Oranienburg auf dem Luisenplatz statt. Zu dieser Feier stellt die Dolmetscher-Schule der Waffen-SS, Obg. 1

Ehrenkompanie.

Die Dolmetscher-Schule der Waffen SS sorgt außerdem für die rechtzeitige Aufstellung einer Gewehrpyramide vor der Rednertribüne. Den An- und Abtransport der vom SS-Zeugamt Oranienburg zur Verfügung gestellten 2 Pak-Geschütze übernimmt das SS-T.-Wachbtl.Sh. Um die Verbundenheit der Waffen-SS mit dem Volkssturm Ausdruck zu verleihen, ist eine zahlreiche Beteiligung aller dienstlich ab- kömmlichen SS- Führer des ganzen Standortes erwünscht. [signed] Der SS-Standortführer Kaindl, SS-Standartenführer. RGVA-SA 1376/1/60 p.2

Kaindl's Sonderbefehl on ideological education. 12.12.44

Jeder Führer, jeder Unterführer und Mann muß ein fanatischer, bis zum letzten entschlossener Nationalsozialist sein. Vortrauen in die Führung, Glaube an den Sieg. Härte und Unbezwinglichkeit der inneren Haltung sind die Voraussetzungen für die Stärke des Kampfwillens und der Schlagkraft der Truppe. From winter 1944 extra 'Waffenausbildung'

RGVA-SA 1376/1/60 p.14

Red Army soldiers seldom proved good correspondents. Most of them wrote out of filial duty to let mothers know that they were still alive and to make sure that they still received letters themselves. Home was almost a dreamworld because it was so far away in time and space from their present experience. Few had enjoyed more than one spell of leave during the whole war, and some had not seen their families since June 1941. To think about it too much was a dangerous weakness. You had to live from one day to the next. In that respect, survival at the front was not so very different from survival in a concentration camp.

The Wilhelm Gustloff was named in honour of the Swiss Nazi assassinated by a Jewish student.

Beria from Lieutenant Gen Petrov and State Security Commissar of the Third Grade, Kobulov. 27 January

'Captured German generals are in very bad spirits and very nervous as a result of the new situation at the front.' Churchill's speech in the H of C on 15 December 44 that he agreed with Stalin that Poland should be compensated by Germany in north and west. 'German generals consider the planned compensation of Poland with the territory of East Prussia and other German territories as a cause for another war.' The position of Free Germany movement had become impossible. Field Marshal Paulus acknowledged 'The Nazis in this matter are more positive than we are, because they are holding on to German territory, trying to preserve its integrity.' 'If they take East Prussia away from us I can swear to every Russian that it will cause another war.' Even General Seydlitz, who had proposed the airlift of German prisoners armed by the Russians to start a revolution within the Reich, thought that 'the ripping away of German lands to create a safety barrier will not be fair'. All the captured generals now realised that the BDO were just being used by the Soviet Union. 'To be quite honest, I am fed up with their

attitude towards me as a canary, or more precisely a parrot. When it suits them, they open the door of the cage to let me speak, and then they shut it again until they next time they need their talking bird.' Seydlitz: 'I am tormented by a terrible anxiety whether we have chosen the right course.' [GARF 9401/2/92 p.283-8]

Conversations recorded by microphones in the last week of January 1945.

Paulus: 'All Hitler thinks about is how to force the German people into new sacrifices. Never before in history has lying been such a powerful weapon in diplomacy and policy. We Germans have been cunningly deceived by a man who usurped power.'

Strecker: 'Why has God become so angry with Germany that he sent us Hitler! Are the German people so ignoble? Have they deserved such a punishment?'

End of January. Paulus's speech: 'It is two years since the Stalingrad catastrophe. And now the whole of Germany is becoming a gigantic Stalingrad.'

Paulus commented afterwards: 'It is funny that I am now a defender of Soviet policy'. [GARF 9401/2/92 p. 283-8]

Chapter 5

Both Zhukov and Konev's armies set up mobile units to repair their trucks. In the 4th Tank Army alone, 924 vehicles needed work on them in January. During the Vistula-Oder operation the same formation used up 2,113 tons of ammunition, which was the equivalent of 130 railway wagon loads. The Soviet tank and motorized forces had to cannibalize vehicles to keep going almost as much as the retreating Germans. Fuel was the other difficulty. Captured German dumps helped, but shortages still disrupted the unity of the advance, just as the German Panzer divisions found during their invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The only solution was to allocate most of the fuel to spearheads and leave other formations to follow on in fits and starts. By the end of the Vistula-Oder operation most formations had less than a reserve tank per vehicle left. One should also not forget the quality of the transport vehicles themselves. Significantly, there has been little acknowledgement on the Soviet side that if it had not been for American Lend-Lease trucks, the Red Army's advance would have taken far longer and the western allies might well have felt obliged to go for Berlin themselves. Transport and supply problems, TsAMO 324/4756/144 pp.86-7; TsAMO 324/4756/18 p.121 and TsAMO 324/4757/9 p.184

A typical letter sent home by a Red Army soldier at this time read: 'We are already on German territory. I would have sent you a letter, but we are constantly in battles. . . Letters are starting to arrive very late and very few of them get through. I think it's because we have moved here, 200 kilometres away from where we were before.' 'We are already. . .', 3 February, Petr Markarovich Garkusha, b.1925, signaller with artillery observation, quoted Shindel [ed.] p.144

Germans, largely as a result of Nazi propaganda, had no sense of relationship to foreigners and the outside world. Agranenko, a Jew, who managed to communicate with German civilians using a the German basis of Yiddish, recorded one conversation in his diary. A woman, whose husband was with the Kriegsmarine in Norway, invited him to her house for a coffee. Because his marine infantry uniform was different to the Red Army, she had guessed he was French. Agranenko corrected her. Unable to resist testing her reaction, he added that he was a Jew. 'You don't look like a Jew', she replied in astonishment. 'Jews have big hooked noses.'

'Yes, I am a Jew.'

'I don't believe you. You're joking.'

'Have you ever seen a Jew?' Agranenko demanded, his anger rising. 'When did you last see one?'

'In 1934'.

'And after 1934'.

'After 1934 there wasn't a Jew left in Elbing'.

'What became of them?'

There was a long pause. She was reluctant to reply. Agranenko claims that he pushed her. 'What became of them?' he demanded again. Agranenko says that she finally replied: 'They were strung up.' But moral outrage may have overcome exactitude: 1934 appears to be premature for such murders. [Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp.17-18]

Ehrenburg known as 'der Leibhetzer Stalins, der Jude Ilja Ehrenburg' 16.1.45, SAPMO-BA R55/793 p.9

Ehrenburg's articles were a gift to Goebbels. On 1 December 1944, Ehrenburg wrote in Krasnaya Swjesta: 'Man müsse mit den ausländischen Sozialdemokraten und ähnlichen Gaunern in dem Demokratien aufräumen, die der Meinung seien, dass man nicht alle Deutschen in einem Topf mit der Hitlerleuten werfen dürfe. Die Rote Armee werde bei ihrem siegreichen Vormarsch in Deutschland auch diese Angelegenheit gründlich behandeln.'

German military authorities claimed that 800 women and children had been killed when Soviet tanks opened fire on a trek column from Guben. And when a detachment of tank troops overtook a refugee column on 19 January, 'the passengers on the carts and vehicles were butchered'. Apparently many of the women were raped before they were killed. The figures were almost certainly exaggerated for propaganda purposes, but such incidents certainly took place. 'the passengers on the carts. . .', 'die Insassen der Fahrzeuge wurden niedergemetzelt', KA-FU, EI: 18 vol.6

A report from Leon Degrelle, of 10 December attached,

French Waffen SS in a bad state, interbal rivalries and political hatreds, especially those between milicien followers of Darnand, the head of the Vichy milice, and those of his rival facsist, Doriot. Degrelle recommended that they be split. IfZ, MA 332, pp.656710-711

Königsberg

The arrested chairman of the district council of Angemonin, Jonas Wilkus, a member of the Nazi Party, said that a large part of the population had not believed the propaganda about Red Army atrocities towards the German population, but on seeing some of the excesses committed some committed suicide. The German women who lived in the attic of his building committed suicide after being repeatedly raped.

'The greatest danger for tanks in full pursuit in densely populated areas is the infantryman's Panzerfaust'.
Gusakovsky

Not one step back.

Measures against deserters. Breslau 13 December 44

'The decisive stage for our fight for existence some cases take place when some elements who have lost their honour and dignity desert to the enemy in order to avoid fighting and preserve their pitiful lives. By doing this they not only betray their comrades, but also harm the front and rears and in the long run lives of German women and children. A true soldier who sheds his blood for the Führer, People, and Fatherland despises dishonest scoundrels and expects correspondiong decisive measures to be taken against such elements and their families. On the basis of the Führer's orders, I therefore order:

1. to immediately open fire with all weapons at any soldier who is openly deserting to the enemy.
2. When there is a suspicion that a soldier has deserted, a trial must be organised on the spot, investigation should be carried out immediately and thoroughly.
3. If the fact of desertion to the enemy is established as a result of the investigation the trial must be end in a death sentence and the sentence will be approved.
4. The family of the man sentenced to death shall answer for the crimes of the person condemned with its property, freedom or life. The punishment for families is to be determined in each individual case by SS Reichsführer and chief of the German police. At the same time a copy of the sentence accompanied

by the corresponding report should be sent via the relevant institutions to the OKW and the RSHA.

5. If there is no irrefutable evidence of desertion to the enemy's side, the investigation should be completed by making a corresponding report which should be sent to the OKW.

6. Units of the Division should be notified immediately of a death sentence and punishment of the family in each case.

7. This order should be read out to the troops and thoroughly explained to them.

'Diese Wahnsinnsstrategie Hitlers' of refusing to withdraw troops. 'In diese Lage wurde nicht mehr für Deutschland, sondern noch nur für Hitler gekämpft, und zwar unter sinnlosen und hohen Blutopfern.' Striking how long it had taken German staff officers to realise. BA-MA MSg1/976 p.46

In the course of the Vistula-Oder operation, ground and anti-aircraft artillery fired over six million shells, and the 1st Belorussian Front alone accounted for 3.2 million.

Western powers were the 'jüdisch- plutokratischen Mächte'. BA-B R55/916 pp.47

Confusion of cause and effect: 'Nur wir Deutsche wissen, was Europa geschehen würde wenn wir die Nerven verlorren, weil wir den Bolschewismus in drei Jahren Kampf besser kennengelernt haben als es durch Bücherlesen oder Reisen in die Sowjet Union möglich ist. . .

'wir haben schon einmal mit unseren Divisionen vor der Hauptstadt des bolschewistischen Reiches gestanden'.

'Stalin hat die Millionenmassen der Sowjet Union nur fanatisiert und wir selbst hatten das Unglück, von unseren Verbündeten getäuscht und verraten zu werden. Nun braust der Mongolensturm des 20. Jahrhunderts gegen das Reich und treibt seine Wellen über deutsche Gaue.' Nobody would be allowed to leave Berlin. 'Jedermann bleibt auf seiner Platz und wer dennoch feige zu verschwinden versuchen sollte, wird vor einem Standgericht abgeurteilt und von einer Einheit des Volkssturms erschossen'. Goebbels Speech 10 February

In Marienburg, 40% destroyed. Quiet streets. Bodies of people, horses and cows. Feather mattresses had been torn to pieces.

Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp.22]

Agranenko taking notes made people afraid. Clearly thought he might be a member of the NKVD.

Vistula crossing [after Marienwerden]. Portraits of Zhukov and Rokossovsky. River 350 metres wide. Bridge across thirty barges.

Placard. 'We've got the Vistula. Take the Oder. Forward to the Spree.'

Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp.46]

Also found Germans had tied up wounded Russians soldiers in a house which was booby-trapped.

Regiment reached the Bay of Stettin on the evening of 6 March. 'You should have seen what a joy it was to wash our faces with water from the Baltic.'

Zebbin fighting for two days. Sank several boats [with refugees??] with their anti-tank guns.

Still 240,000 refugees waiting to leave East Prussia on 22 March. Getting out only 8 to 10,000 a week. 600,000 trapped in Pomerania.

'Es muss daher angenommen werden, daß 900,000 bis 1 Million Pommern und Flüchtlinge aus dem Osten in Verlust geraten sind.' Check translation. 22 March BA-B R55/616 p.248

Denmark in last few days 55,000 refugees arrived by sea and 27,000 by land.

Goebbels self-congratulation over help for refugees from East. Care for orphans and separated ones. Photos of them. The young ones do not even know their names.

Most of the Jews from Lodz were gassed in the concentration camp of Belzec. [letter, Burleigh]

YALTA

Tedder meeting with Stalin 15 January. Report by interpreter, Major A. Birse [second sec Brit Embassy] revealed how much the Western Allies wanted to believe Stalin. 'Stalin was in best of humours, started with joke about Eisenhower's present, then instructed interpreters not to take notes. As he dislikes fulsome compliments, Tedder's direct approach and avoidance of such, made good impression. Also he appeared to appreciate direct military contact with SHAEF and absence of politics. He was impressed by frank reference to our difficulties and showed great interest in our air effort in west and need for bombing oil targets.

Stalin made helpful interjections during Tedder's report, produced his map early in the interview and disclosed Red Army plans. This was meeting us more than half-way. He explained Soviet plans clearly, remarking on German policy of diverting reserves to Budapest area. He asked Tedder to take a letter to Eisenhower, evidently well pleased with the meeting. Consider that this was one of the most satisfactory and encouraging meetings.' NARA RG334/Entry309/Box3

[NB. It is striking how Stalin was able to give the impression of frankness over Red Army plans at this stage, and how different things were on 1 April, when he lied quite shamelessly about the Berlin Operation.]

Stalin told Tedder evening of 15 January that 'the Soviets had wished to wait for good weather but 'the attack had been launched regardless of wether conditions.' Told him '160 divisions engaged'. Immediate objectives Cracow, Lodz and Konigsberg.

Stalin talked of the end of May 'when the weather will again favour large scale operations'. [Meeting 15 January still] Marshal Stalin said that, in his opinion, the war will not end before Summer'. NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Tedder concerned that the crossing of the Rhine would be taking place in March just when Russian momentum slowing.

NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Stalin's statement: 'The Red Army is now engaged in a large scale offensive. This offensive took a little over a month to prepare and was then held in abeyance waiting for weather conditions which would favor the employment of the Soviet artillery and air forces'. Meanhile, however, he had been aware of the German attack on the Western Front. . . He had understood the situation at once and, in view of the allied need, he had decided to launch the operation regardless of the weather'. [As well as the objectives of attacking to occupy all Polish territory before the Crimean conference and avoid the the predicted thaw,

it might also be the case that Stalin wanted to advance the launch-date of the offensive to take advantage of the fact that the Hitler's main armoured reserves were tied down on the Western front.]

'Russian participation in the war against Japan'. On agenda for next US Brit USSR staff conference. (Letter 18 January). Soviet Union very nearly managed to occupy north island. US had done bulk of the fighting, and Stalin was able to move in rather like Mussolini in 1940 after Hitler had knocked out France. True that U.S. naval vessels planning to 'operate in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan', and the United States wanted to be 'entitled to demand use of Soviet services and facilities' in the Far

East. NARA RG334/Entry309/Box3 Berlin Meeting

'The natural inhibition that all visitors have in pinning Stalin down' [Reade to General Marshall re Tedder visit and why he thought it a mistake to have excluded Harriman]. 'Harriman is persistent and tenacious and has passed the stage of having inhibitions when talking to Stalin'. Dislikes idea of visiting officers having direct access to Stalin on their own.

Stalin visited Churchill on first afternoon of Yalta conference, keen to convey the impression that the Red Army could be in Berlin in no time. He suggested that the British forces in Italy might like to attack through the north-west tip of Yugoslavia into Austria to join up with the left flank of Marshal Tolbukhin's forces. Stalin knew that Churchill had always wanted the western Allies to attack Germany and Austria from the south in the hope of forestalling the Soviet occupation of central Europe, that virtually inevitable consequence of the strategy agreed at the Teheran conference in December 1943. Churchill could only suppress his frustration, with the remark: 'The Red Army may not give us time to complete this operation'.

General Antonov, repeated the proposal the next day to the American and British Combined Chiefs of Staff. In fact, it may have been part of a pattern to encourage the Americans and British to focus more on the south than on northern Germany and Berlin. At Christmas, General Deane, the chief of American military liaison in Moscow had reported: 'Stalin's thinking is apparently pointed toward joint action between the Anglo-American forces and the Red Army in southern Europe.' Later events would show that the one thing Stalin wished to avoid at all costs was an anglo-american thrust across north Germany to Berlin. This was Churchill and Field Marshal Montgomery's pet project. Fortunately for Stalin, it was firmly opposed by Marshall and Eisenhower. NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2 'The Red Army may. . .', PRO CAB 120/170, quoted Gilbert, p.1173.

The American president also disagreed with Churchill over the role the French should be allowed to play in the post-war settlement. Roosevelt disliked de Gaulle. Influenced by Admiral Leahy, previously his ambassador to Marshal Petain, Roosevelt was certain that de Gaulle would turn out to be a military dictator. He suspected that the British supported France more as a fellow member of the colonial powers club than as a counter-balance to Germany. Roosevelt was as unenthusiastic as Stalin that Churchill should insist on allowing the French a zone of occupation in Germany and recognizing them as fellow victors to soothe their wounded pride. Churchill did, however, manage to persuade him to change his mind at Yalta, and to persuade Stalin. It was the prime minister's only victory there.

Back in London, after the conference was over, Churchill addressed the House of Commons on the Yalta conference, including its thorniest subject, Poland. Churchill was proud of his speech, but again it is hard to know whether he had clearly recognized what had been agreed and what had been postponed. He of course emphasized, as any politician would, the successes rather than the failures. He paid far more attention to unity rather than division which would immediately be seized upon by German propaganda. 'Most solemn declarations', he stated, 'have been made by Marshal Stalin and the Soviet Union that the sovereign independence of Poland is to be maintained'. But the word 'maintained' rang a false note after Stalin's seizure of eastern Poland with Nazi agreement in 1939. 'The Poles will have their future in their own hands,' he added, 'with the simple limitation that they must honestly follow, in harmony with their allies, a policy friendly to Russia. That is surely reasonable'.

Even Harold Nicolson, a keen supporter, noticed that Churchill's offer of British citizenship to Poles in the west was hardly a ringing endorsement of his stated belief that the Soviet leaders' 'word is their bond'. His policy seemed to be to put the moral onus on Stalin to organize free elections in Poland when he must have realized by then that Stalin would never allow the country to be 'free and independent'. He had admitted as much on 23 January when he said to an aide: 'Make no mistake, all the Balkans, except Greece, are going to be bolshevized; and there is nothing I can do to prevent it. There is nothing I can do for poor Poland either'. 'Most solemn declarations. . .', Churchill to House of Commons, 27 February, quoted Victory, p. 55-7. 'so-called Partisans. . .', 21 November 1944, quoted Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.1096 'Make no mistake. . .', quoted Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.1157

Stalin had never forgiven the French for their collapse in 1940. The large French army had not only failed to weaken Hitler, it had inadvertently strengthened him. The invasion of the Soviet Union the following year had been greatly helped by all the French military vehicles taken as war booty. The Soviet leader had another, even longer standing prejudice. In 1920, de Gaulle had served as one of the French advisers to the Polish army which defeated Tukhachevsky at the Battle of the Vistula. Stalin had been one of those blamed for the disaster. It would appear that he had never forgiven either Marshal Tukhachevsky, whom he had executed in 1937, or the Poles.

Depopulation of the East Prussian countryside. 26 girls brought in from Estonia on a Studebaker truck to milk bellowing Friesian cows bellowing in pain. Their 'udders a bluish red, hanging almost to the ground.' Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17]

To Beria 28 February 1945

Chief of 2nd Department of SMERSH Lieutenant Colonel Ratner.

KONIGSBERG

Tkachenko, commissar of state security with Samland group of troops.

'As troops of the Red Army approached Konigsberg, a significant part of the population of East Prussia fled into the city. Consequently the old buildings in the centre of the town were crowded with refugees. Now that the organized evacuation of civilians has stopped, the city is seized with panic and people more and more frequently express their discontent and mistrust of Hitler's government. The population of the town

dejected by the continual bombardment opposes continued resistance, but it is scared by Goebbels's propaganda so fear of the Russians makes them long to escape to central Germany.' Daily bread ration for civilians down 180 grams.

New general orders that any German male from 15-55 who does not report for front line service, or 55-60 in the case of the Volkssturm, will be shot on the spot. 'The morale of the Königsberg garrison is severely shaken. Soldiers put on civilian clothes and desert. On 6th and 7th February, corpses of 80 German soldiers were piled up at the northern railways station. A placard was erected above them: "They were cowards but died just the same".' [GARF 9401/2/93 p.324]

Beria to Stalin up to 17 February (since start of offensive) 74,499 enemy elements had been removed.

Up to 9 March 122,339 enemy elements removed.

including 1,625 ROA and 11,225 traitors to the Motherland.

NKVD situation 25 February

Since 1 January a total of 81,224 Germans taken prisoner.

1st Belorussian Front took 30,729

1st Ukrainian Front 25,503

Situation to 1 March

Mobilisation of Germans

1st Belorussian Front 24,535

1st Ukrainian Front 31,437

[GARF 9401/2/93 p.254]

East Prussia

987 members of bandit uprising groups

1,386 ROA and 7,050 traitors to the Motherland.

Tsanava was the NKVD rep. on 2nd Belorussian Front

[GARF 9401/2/92 p.238]

GARF 9401/2/95 p.1.

26-30 March clearing rear areas of 2nd Belorussian Front by NKVD troops. 10,112 men. Operations led by operations groups of the Army and SMERSH departments. They searched 2,000 villages and towns and 4,690 sq kilometres of forest. 18,408 arrested of which:

Red Army prisoners of war of Germans 971

Stragglers Red Army 666

Those without documents 244

Civilians

Germans trying to avoid internment 3,767

Germans without docs 97

Citizens of the USSR and allied countries

taken by Germans to Germany 4,681

Other suspicious elements 6,845

Soldiers and officers of the enemy 1,054

Soldiers and officers of allied armies 83

From the total number of the people arrested, 5,100 already screened, of which 1,427 arrested, of which German spies that are suspected of espionage 8,* members of fascist organisations 893, members of the Volkssturm 360; members and cdrs of political organs, 12; traitors of the Motherland 5; other suspicious 149. [*So how many Polish?]

Beria from Serov, 1st Belorussian Front, 29 January [GARF 9401/2/92 p.288]

Statistics

spies and saboteurs 63

ROA commanders and traitors of the Motherland 354

'active participants of enemy underground organisations' incl. Armee Kraiova 661. Significant that out of the 2,219 arrested by the NKVD, no less than 1,562 were Poles. Even Polish officers were arrested as 'German agents'. Armee Kraiova members captured, many were 'interrogated' to reveal their arms dumps. Suppression of Polish nationalism was clearly just as important a priority as dealing with genuine German agents. Polish Communists wore a red armband.

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[GARF 9401/2/92 p.238]

10 March Beria to Stalin

[GARF 9401/2/93 p.352]

NKVD had 'mobilised' 68,680 Germans, the vast majority in the rear of Zhukov and Koniev's armies.

Up to 9 March 122,339 enemy elements removed.

1,625 ROA and 11,225 traitors to the Motherland.

Main Polish round up behind 1st Belorussian Front. 9,000 Poles out of a total of 23,990.

8 March Beria from Serov 1st Belorussian Front [GARF 9401/2/93 p.334]

'only an insignificant number of people stayed in the villages and towns. The population is influenced by propaganda which persuaded them that the Red Army would eliminate them all. In this connection suicides have taken place. For example in the village of Wollitz in the district of Brandenburg, a German called Müller tried to commit suicide by cutting his wrists. In the same village the German Grunwald threw his wife and nine children into a well and tried to kill himself as well. When arrested, Grunwald said that

Germans realised that they are responsible for all the destruction and murder which the German Army carried out on Russian territory. Fearing this responsibility, they prefer to commit suicide.

'The SMERSH group of of the 2nd Tank Army recorded 35 cases of suicide in five days in the town of Zoldin. For example, an ex-major of the the German army, retired due to ill-health, whose name was von Klebst, shot himself after shooting his wife, an old woman of sixty.' Also the suicide of a senior woman teacher 'who had first killed her two children aged five and three by cutting their veins'. [GARF 9401/2/93 p.334]

In one attic twelve people were found to have hanged themselves. Captured Nazi officials said that the suicides were due to the fact that evacuation had proved impossible due to the rapid advance of the Red Army.

When combing the area near the town of Bublitz on 27 March, an armed group of ex-soldiers and officers of the Red Army was arrested, numbering 22 men. For one and a half months they had been committing looting and robbing. They included an Uzbek lieutenant who was a Party member, a senior sergeant, driver of a self-propelled gun, a junior sergeant member of the Party.

Three Party members and 1 Komsomol member. One deserter escaped from a shtraf unit. They all deserted in February from 18 Rifle Division.

Prikaz 0016 of the NKVD of the USSR 11 January 1945. Appointment of SMERSH and NKVD chiefs 'to carry out the necessary Chekist measures'.

Executions of Red Army officers and soldiers in 1944 Red Army and NKVD Tribunals sentencing 1944

January 7,678 642 death

February 6,039 ?

March 7,763

April 9,220 673

May 9,641 831

June 9,077 735

July 9,418 688

August 9,579 802

September 8,733 720

October 8,358 836 including one General

Average 8,550/ month 740/month

102,600 8,800 for the year averaged out

Poland

Claims that 'four active members of the Polish labour party killed. On 15 December nine people from Armia Kraiova broke into a flat in which a meeting was taking place.' A member of the Polich labour party entrusted with land reform was killed. 18 December some people attacked a militsia post and wounded a policeman on duty.

A police officer and three men were killed. 5 December. On 4 December a Lieutenant Koslov was poisoned. On 9 December an unknown band shot at a group of Polish militiamen, wounded the chief of militsia and a militsiaman. The corpse of the militsiaman who was killed was buried only on 20 December when a cavalry squadron entered this village. When the squadron approached the village, the bandits ran away.

p.8 More cases. p.9 More cases. Three pages of relatively minor incidents. On 6 December bandits hanged a collective farm manager. A women who had refused to reveal where he lived was hanged. 11 January a family of four people hanged.

Minor incidents of revolt repressed with great cruelty. RGVA 32891/1/123 p.42

Antonov correspondence

Complaint about Lieutenant Myron King 5 February landing a B-17 at Kuflevo in Poland taking a civilian on board 'without the knowledge of the Soviet military commander. Then King landed again at Shchuchin aerodrome, where the civilian pretended to be Jack Smith, a member of the crew'. 'Only after interference by the Soviet Command [in fact SMERSH], Lieutenant King announced that this was not a member of the crew, but a stranger whom they did not know and took on board the airplane to take him away to England'. 'According to our information he was a terrorist-saboteur brought into Poland from London' [Letter 30 March 45] Lieutenant Myron L. King 401st Bomb Group, 614th Bomber Squadron. Reprimanded and sentenced to loss of \$100 pay per month for six months. Tried in Russia. Stalin 15 April told Harriman convinced that King case proved that US was supplying White Poles. Finlly allowed to leave Russia 27 April [King case ran to 45 cables, involving Stalin, Antonov, Eisenhower, Spaatz and Marshall].

On 22 March, on the aerodrome occupied by the Soviet air force at Meletc an American Liberator made a landing supposedly for lack of fuel. The crew of the plane [amounted to] 10 people. Commander of the plane [was] Donald Bridge. The plane was placed under guard. The crew was fed and put up for the night. The senior Soviet cheif Colonel Kozhemykin personally through an interprter at 1000 hours 24 March frobad the commander of the Liberator to fly the plane away without permission. At 1500 24 march 1945, the crew asked permission to check the plane for their belongings which was granted. But on going into the

plane started up the engines and regardless of the signals forbidding the flight, took off. In this manner, regardless of the fact that the crew was afforded friendly assistance and hospitality, the American crew rudely violated military discipline and through deception took off from the aerodrome. These actions of the American crew called forth extreme indignation and perplexity on the part of the personnel of the Red Army Air Force.

4 April. Cases of British and US planes landing on our territory. 'This happens due to a loss of vigilance on the part of Red Army officers.

1. on 5 February an American Flying Fortress landed on Shuchin airfield and tried to fly back with a Pole whom they picked up on Polish territory. He was dressed in US Air Force uniform, and the crew claimed that he was a member of the crew. Only the intervention of SMERSH prevented the departure of this plane and the unknown Pole who tried to run off was shot.

2. An American Liberator which landed at Melets airfield on 24 March was directly forbidden to depart, but the crew deceived cdrs of the airfield and flew away without permission due to negligence of the officer and guards who had been detailed to watch the plane. Signed by Volkov deputy chief of NKVD troops guarding rear areas of 1st Belorussian Front.

RGVA 32925/1/100 p.205

Poland 5 March [Beria from Gorbatyuk, chief of NKVD troops rear areas 2nd Belorussian Front] [Gorbatyuk later put in charge of Vlassov soldiers reception in Russia]. 12 kms south of Tuhol. Ambush Red Army officers in a car. In the pursuit by NKVD troops, saw that the attackers were dressed in Red Army uniforms. One was killed, but he carried documents showing that he was Corporal Gross Horst. Following day, others from the group captured in the forest, Franz Krebs, a 26-year-old Obergefreiter from Infantry Battalion 346, a Volkssturm soldier and a Wilhelm Krebs also a Volkssturm soldier born in 1878. 'The arrested men were executed'. [GARF 9401/2/94 p.45]

Another problem was booby traps. 'On 15 February in Kreisburg, two soldiers approached the corpse of a German soldier and tried to turn it over. The mine exploded and wounded one. An order was issued, that sappers should be called to examine German corpses.' 'On 15 February. . .', RGVA 38680/1/3 p.4

SMERSH arrested 4 soldiers for 'systematic anti-Soviet talk and terroristic intentions against sergeants and officers'. RGVA 38686/1/26 p.36

Buildings with signs in Russian 'Mine quarantine'. Not cleared of mines. Sometimes sign was false written by soldiers who had occupied the building and wanted to keep others out.

Paranoia. Stories about German paratroopers. Perhaps invented to keep NKVD troops alert.

5 April. To cmdrs all Frontier Guards Regiments. The enemy is appealing to all Germans who stayed behind in occupied territory to become members of the Werwolf organisation. We have information that Germans have already started to organise such groups in our rear areas. The places where Germans can join Werwolf are indicated by leaflets and previously agreed passwords. Members of Werwolf will resist us using their weapons and using terror. All Germans who assist the Red Army will be shot by this organisation which will mainly act during the night. RGVA 32925/1/100 p.173

[Very hard to assess. Werwolf played into hands of NKVD paranoia, so incidents exaggerated.]

'Minsk is almost completely destroyed, and the buildings which survive are used as prisons. A huge camp, buildings with barred windows, barbed wire everywhere. About 100,000 Jews were killed in Minsk. People are sitting in the streets in armchairs with belongings outside destroyed houses with all kinds of strange objects, armchairs, paintings an elk's head with horns. [Grossman papers RGALI 1710/3/47 p.1]

Minsk partisans beat two German prisoners with agricultural tools. They were apparently convinced that these two had killed their daughters and sons. They broke their bones and even carried on beating their bodies after they were dead.

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Germans who hear that Elbing will become part of Poland wanted to move to Königsberg. They preferred to be under Soviet rule rather than Polish. [Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp.42]

Amoral events in a particular NKVD Regiment. Immoral events increased due to contacts with doubtful people and the incidence of venereal disease increased from 43 case in first quarter to 80 cases in the second quarter. The number of immoral events has decreased from 35 to 27 among Party members and increased from 20 to 40 among Komsomol members but the main immoral acts were carried out by non-Party members.

Among officers and sergeants number of immoral acts decreased from from 46 to 36 but among privates increased from 45 to 102 in the second quarter.

In percentage terms, the main culprits are non-Party members who are privates.

Syphilis 5 cases whole of NKVD 1st Ukrainian Front in 16 Frontier Guards Regiment including chief political officer who had sexual intercourse with one of the women evacuated to the rear. Gonorrhoea, 15 cases of which 4 officers. Many of the infected men were sent before a military tribunal. All had disciplinary penalties imposed on them.

Pavel Kochlov from the district of Omsk, reported that their battalion commander told them that 'once across the German frontier, everything was allowed, looting and raping women'. 'beim Überschreiten der deutschen Grenze, daß nun alles erlaubt sei, zu plündern und Frauen zu vergewaltigen.' KA-FU Öll vol. 35

If a father tried to defend a daughter, he was shot down.

8 March Beria from Serov 1st Belorussian Front [GARF 9401/2/93 p.334]

'only an insignificant number of people stayed in the villages and towns. The population is influenced by propaganda which persuaded them that the Red Army would eliminate them all. In this connection suicides have taken place. For example in the village of Wollitz in the district of Brandenburg, a German called Müller tried to commit suicide by cutting his wrists. In the same village the German Grunwald threw his wife and nine children into a well and tried to kill himself as well. When arrested, Grunwald said that Germans realised that they are responsible for all the destruction and murder which the German Army carried out on Russian territory. Fearing this responsibility, they prefer to commit suicide.

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In one attic twelve people were found to have hanged themselves. Captured Nazi officials said that the suicides were due to the fact that evacuation had proved impossible due to the rapid advance of the Red Army.

Negative phenomena in the army of liberation caused significant damage to the prestige of the Soviet Union and the armed forces and could have a negative influence in the future relations with the countries through which our troops were passing. The Soviet Union had to show the peoples of Europe that it was not hordes of Asians who had entered their land but the army of a civilised state. [NB she uses the vocabulary of the time, avoiding words like rape]. Sinyavskaya p.184, note 27

Ostarbeiterin rape

The Zemland Group of Troops

Deputy Commander of 298 AP 192 Rifle Division Major Sluntyaev and the commander of the division Major

Mubarakov at the time of choosing the command post of the division found a poor old house, eight men and one woman and the woman who spoke Russian very well said she was taken by Germans from the town of Riga and the men were French. In the evening Sluntayev and Mubarakov drank and invited the woman to their dugout. They were drunk and Major Sluntayev invited two Red Army soldiers Chavkin and Romanov and took all the valuables from the French and ordered them to shoot the Frenchmen. They shot them and then they all raped that woman back in their shelter.

On 5 February they found the bodies of three of the Frenchmen and the other five had disappeared. Afraid that the woman would tell everything, Major Mubarakov ordered Chavkin to kill her and he shot her. On 12 March Major Sluntayev and Mubarakov were reduced to the ranks, condemned to 10 years imprisonment and sent to a shtraf battalion. The soldiers Chavkin and Romano, on the orders of the divisional commander were sent to a shtraf company.

Being in the military headquarters, the Soviet citizens show interest in the life of the Soviet Union, international relations and express their will to start work as soon as possible. Also Tsigankov recounts that several headquarters work badly in the political and educational work among young Soviet citizens. They don't take care of their personal life and also there are cases of offences against women and girls by soldiers and officers.

Comrade Tsigankov: 'In the town kommandantur of Bunslau (the town commandant is Major Kravchenko and the deputy commandant and political officer Major Rudakov) and there are over 100 women and girls in the headquarters. They live in a separate building not far from the kommandantur, but there is no security there and because of this, there are many offences and even rape of women who live in this dormitory by different soldiers who enter the dormitory at night and terrorise the women. On 5 March late at night, there were 60 officers and soldiers, mainly from the Third Guards Tank Army. Most of them were drunk, and they attacked and offended women and girls. Even though they were ordered by the commandant to leave the dormitory, the group of tankists threatened him with their guns and caused a scuffle. All these incredible incidents did not provoke the necessary reaction from the commandant, Major Kravchenko. He sent a group of his guards which did not carry out the order, and returned without arresting anybody. Only in the morning in one of the dormitories, Senior Tankist Seregin Ivan, a Komsomol member, a mechanic and driver from the 91st Tank Brigade, Seregin, being over-drunk attacked girls and offended them and when he was arrested he found that his clothes and his gun had been stolen. This is not the only incident. It happens every night and because of this, those who stay in Bunslau are frightened and demoralised and there is much dissatisfaction among them. One of them Maria Shapoval said: 'I waited for the Red Army for days and nights. I waited for my liberation, and now soldiers treat us worse than the Germans did. I am not happy to be alive.'

Reporting all this to you, we think it necessary to send representatives of the main political department of the Red Army Glavpurka and the department of political education, supervised by the representative on repatriation of the USSR Council of Commissars (i.e. Golikov) as well as representatives of the Central Committee of the Komsomol to the Front assembly and transit points and to oblast and regional points for the reception and distribution in order to undertake measures on improving political and cultural work with repatriated Soviet citizens and improvement of their living conditions.

Whole Polish Army around 400,000, it sent its main forces to take part in Berlin operation, two armies, a tank corps, an aviation corps, an independent artillery Division and a number of reserve units.

200,000 Polish troops in Berlin operation

General S. Poplavsky 1st Polish Army

General K. Sverchevsky 2nd Polish Army

To Beria

German prisoners consider the formation of Volkssturm battalions as Germany's biggest mistake, particularly the fact that the Volkssturm leadership was given to the Nazi Party. There are widespread rumours that Oberpresident and Gauleiter of East Prussia Koch, tried to escape from Königsberg in civilian clothes but was stopped by soldiers who recognized him and then shot him.

There are rumours among arrested women that they have been rounded up for sterilization. Clearly the German women feared that the Soviets were about to deal out SS medicine as an act of revenge. [GARF 9401/2/94 p.86]

Search and arrest of deserters.

To chief of NKVD 2nd Belorussian Front 25 December

p.8 Deserters handed over to SMERSH Frontier guards used for searching for deserters. RGVA 32904/1/19 p.8

Belorussian and Lithuanian deserters. 3 January 1945. 'All the above listed deserters were all in quarantine. They did not appear when the battalion was lined up for supper. One private overheard them discussing desertion when joining regiment.' All joined regiment on 19 December 44. Doubled number of regimental guards.

10 April. Order on forbidding marriages with female citizens of foreign countries. Orders explained to officers. Cases had taken place in communications company.

RGVA 32925/1/100 p.263

Accusations against the Swiss vice-consul Charles Branderberg. Thirteen Swiss citizens in town of Elbing guarded by NKVD troops. Accused of working with National Socialist Union of Switzerland in Königsberg, Tilsit and other towns. [GARF 9401/2/93 p.63]

NKVD situation 25 February

[GARF 9401/2/93 p.279]

Since 1 January a total of 81,224 Germans taken prisoner.

1st Belorussian Front took 30,729

1st Ukrainian Front 25,503

During the three days from 9 March to morning of 12 March the estimate by Front staffs of enemy captured so far is 697,000 men, including 47 generals. Of the total, 82,000 men are in assembly areas, while the remaining 615,000 have not yet been passed to the NKVD by military units. According to NKVD and Front staffs, the total including those not yet transferred to NKVD reaches 2,070,000. Captured Germans represent 1,300,000 of the total.

16 January soldiers unknown killed sergeant at railway station and seized his documents and disappeared.
RGVA 32904/1/19 p.115

In their Soviet prison, the German generals captured at Stalingrad were in despair. They had just heard the decisions of 'the Crimean conference' at Yalta, and were appalled to learn that Germany was to lose Silesia and East Prussia. If they knew about the microphones, they were clearly beyond caring. Those, like General von Seydlitz who had done everything to help the Soviet Union end the war under the banner of the Free Germany movement, were the most dismayed. 'What are we now after all that has happened', bewailed Seydlitz, 'and when next to nothing is left of Germany. They'll start to reproach us for what we have done.' 'The National Committee [for a Free Germany] was a complete fraud', another officer chipped in. They finally realized that they had been completely exploited by the NKVD. 'What are we now. . .', To Beria from Kryvenko and Kobulov, GARF 9401/2/93 p.227-231

p.83 After the bombing of Dresden, Goebbels is said to have urged the use of chemical retaliation against London using V rockets. This was apparently rejected by the senior Wehrmacht officers present. Hitler at this time was not averse to using chemical weapons against the Red Army but was ambivalent in his feelings about its deployment against the western allies.

As Soviet prisoners of war heard of the Red Army's advance from new prisoners and Polish civilians, they kept up their morale singing patriotic songs, such as My Motherland is Big and Wide. British and American prisoners of war sent to 47th Army for repatriation.

RGASPI 17/25/328

2 March Eisenhower to Deane 'In view of the great progress of the Soviet offensive, is there likely to be any major change in Soviet plans from those explained to Tedder. [Then asked whether] there will be a lull in operations mid-March to mid-May'. NARA RG334/Entry309/Box3

Chapter 7 - Clearing the Rear Areas

[GARF 9401/2/93 pp.6-15]

RASTENBURG Passed to Stalin 22 February.

To Beria from Abakumov of 3rd Belorussian Front.

'After our troops occupied the region, we started looking for the site. We interrogated prisoners and found on 14 February near the Masurian lakes in the triangle Rastenburg-Letzen-Angeburg, Hitler's HEADQUARTERS, Ribbentrop's residence, the headquarters of OKW and the hunting lodge where the senior commanders of the German army stayed when visiting Hitler. We thoroughly visited the buildings and the sites.

The site of Hitler's headquarters has ferro-concrete defences, barbed wire, minefields, large numbers of fire positions and barracks for guards. It is carefully camouflaged. It is difficult to imagine that anyone who did not belong directly to the headquarters could enter this inaccessible lair of iron and concrete.

Four square kilometres. Forbidden zone of 10 kilometres. Airfield 5 kms to south.

It was forbidden to step off the road. 'On the left hand side of the barrier there are barracks where the guards lived. There we found epaulettes and uniforms of SS soldiers in the Grossdeutschland regiment.'

Camouflaged observation posts up to 35 metres high in the forest. Gate No. 1 all the bunkers blown up.

'Camouflage nets, artificial trees and bushes'. Roads and alleys covered with green camouflage nets. Lighting with dark blue lamps. Furniture is very simple.

Hitler's room identified by a photo of Hitler and Mussolini. Found telephone directory for the headquarters .

p.15 'In my opinion it would be interesting for our specialists to come to the site of Hitler's headquarters and see all these well organised bunkers.

SMERSH wearing army uniforms, not NKVD. Frontier guards green flash, NKVD crimson flash. Abakumov wearing a general's uniform.

SMERSH thirty men per Front department.

[GARF 9401/2/93 pp.6-15]

At the barrier signs 'Halt. Military Site. Entrance Forbidden to Civilians.'

Sign by road. 'It is forbidden to step off the road'.

'The whole forest is surrounded by several rows of barbed wire, including a twisted concertina wire. To the right of the entrance barrier there are several stone blockhouses which contained mines, camouflage material and construction. On the left hand side there were barrack blocks where the guards lived. In this barracks epaulettes and uniforms of soldiers of the SS and the Grossdeutschland Regiment were found. Near the barracks there were stores of grenades and heicle parts. Deeper into the forest were camouflaged watchtowers up to 35 metres high.

Trenches on both sides of road.

(Abakumov had translator). Second barrier. Inner perimeter fence of barbed wire, then an electrified mesh fence. Behind there are ferro-concrete fire pillbox positions. The headquarters area contains 12 huge bunkers up to fourteen metres deep, with walls five metres thick and roofs eight metres deep. Linked by passages. All bunkers and other ferro-concrete constructions were painted the colours of the forest. Special camouflage nets and artificial trees and bushes hide the tops of the bunkers. The paths and roads around the buildings are covered with green camouflage nets. The roads and approaches to the headquarters were lit by dark blue electric lamps with shades. The camouflage system was very thorough. Troops and flak detachments. High voltage cables.

A third inner perimeter in the headquarters area. Bunker there had bullet-proof armoured shutters. Surrounded by more than ten emplacements and an underground garage capable of taking 18 cars.

'we entered with great care'. An empty safe in one room. Rooms 'simply furnished' (monastery and a concentration camp). Only certain that they had found the right place when they discovered evidence. A sign: 'Führer's Wehrmacht Adjutant'. An order on security signed by the commandant of Führer headquarters. 'This order uses the code-name Wolffschaze which means Wolf's Lair. We have checked on this, by asking interpreters and captured German officers. The prisoners confirmed that Hitler's base really did have the codename Wolfsschanze. We were also told that the name came from the nacent origin of the name Adolf, which stood for brave wolf in the old German language.' [NB Astonishing that after all the generals they had captured at Stalingrad and afterwards, that they had not extracted such information already]

We also found a very important document which was marked Top Secret. This was a list of telephone numbers in the headquarters which reveals the structure and apparatus.

??? State that documents found relating to construction and security at the site which are supposedly dated January 1945, and yet German sources indicate that the Führer headquarters was evacuated in September 1944.

Railroad camouflaged. Himmler's headquarters the lines of wire with mines between. SS evacuation much more thorough. Himmler in carefull camouflaged train.

Mines either side of road. Approaches mined on all sides. 'Achtung Minen'.

'We have placed NKVD troops around Hitler's headquarters, Himmler's headquarters OKW and Ribbentrop's residence and we are continuing our search for documents. I think it would be interesting for our specialists to go to Hitler's headquarters and see all these bunkers.' [GARF 9401/2/94 p.45]

Rape in East Prussia

Grete Hinzert in Refrat to Walter Hinzert 14 .10.46 'Maria hat auch ein Kind von den Mongolen bekommen, aber es ist Gott sei Dank tot. Maria hat furchtbares durchgemacht, wurde 20 mal am Tage vergewaltigt.' Maria escaped from Elbing. Extrait des lettres censurés SHAT 7 P 128 Direction Générale et Inspection des P.G. de l'Axe, Paris

Leaflets from Wehrmacht addressed to 'Deutsche Frauen, deutsche Rüstungsarbeiter und Bauern!' threatening hard punishment to anyone who harbours or helps deserters. KA, Förvarsstaben, Utrikesavdelningen KA-FU, EI: 18 vol.6

Vineta Propagandadienst Ostraum. Broadcasting in Russian on Ostfront. Reorganised 15 February. Moved to Barstrasse south off Fehrbelliner Platz after being bombed out. Destruction of transmitter in bombing.

Controlled by Reichssicherheitshauptamt. Supervised by SS-Obersturmbannführer Ebeling. Worked closely with the propaganda staff of Wlassof-Aktion They were classified as ausländischen Gelfolgschaftmitglieder (foreigners who had sworn fealty to the same cause). BA-B R55/1296 p.3

Length of time for information from front line to get back to Führer headquarters. 'Es war lächerlich, ausgebildeten Generalstabsoffizieren vorzurechnen, wie lange eine Nachricht von der vorderen Linie bis zum Heeresgruppensabth ohne Reibungen braucht.' Eismann BA-MA MSg1/976 p.38]

'It was laughable', wrote Eismann, 'to see experienced staff officers trying to estimate how long information from the front line took to reach an army group staff.' This exercise, which they had all practised at the Kriegsakademie, only confirmed that operations could not be run from afar, especially when the enemy was advancing so quickly. Orders from Führer headquarters, at least thirty-six hours out of date by the time they arrived, only confused the situation still more.

Verordnung über die Errichtung von Standgerichten with effect from 1 February Reichsgesetzblatt Teil I, 20 February 1945,

Signed by Göring, Keitel and Dr Lammers, the minister and chief of the Reich Chancellery.

'Die Härte des Ringens um den Bestand des Reiches erfordert von jedem Deutschen Kampfbestimmtheit und Hingabe bis zum Äußersten'.

Standgerichte set up in 'feindbedrohten Reichsverteidigungsbezirken' enemy threatened Reich defence areas

Danzig. GARF 9401/2/96 pp.255-261

During the battles for Danzig on 28 March 1945, the chief of the personnel dept of 18th Rifle Corps 15th Rifle Division sent Lieutenant Orlov to the personnel dept of the 65th Army to negotiate and to attend courses for interpreters. When he asked about the whereabouts of the Lieutenant chief of the personnel dept of the 65th Army on 17 May, replied that on 29 March 45, Lieutenant Orlov was sent back to 15th Rifle Division where he still has not arrived. Orlov had been in a German prison camp, then in a partisan regiment. ??Did he desert because he had been in a German prison and had discovered that he might be sent to the Gulag.

Red Army ration in March 600 grams of bread, 50 grams of sugar and 20 grams of Makhorka, plus twice a day hot food. Vodka ration was 100 grams two or three times a week. [NB rather low. Much lower than earlier on. Was this because the ration was over-supplemented from captured sources?]

Poland 5 March [Beria from Gorbatyuk, chief of NKVD troops rear areas 2nd Belorussian Front] [Gorbatyuk later put in charge of Vlassov soldiers reception in Russia]. 12 kms south of Tuhol. Ambush Red Army officers in a car. In the pursuit by NKVD troops, saw that the attackers were dressed in Red Army uniforms. One was killed, but he carried documents showing that he was Corporal Gross Horst. Following day, others from the group captured in the forest, Franz Krebs, a 26-year-old Obergefreiter from Infantry Battalion 346, a Volkssturm soldier and a Wilhelm Krebs also a Volkssturm soldier born in 1878 (hardly Werwolf material). 'The arrested men were executed'.

On 7 March we arrested Ulrich Behr, a German born in 1906. He confessed under interrogation that in February 1945 he was engaged as a spy by a resident of German intelligence, Hauptmann Schrap. His mission was to stay in the rear of the Red Army to recruit agents and to carry out sabotage, intelligence and terroristic activities. Fulfilling this task, Behr recruited twelve agents. [Signed Tsanava]

11 March 15 kms south of Gross Skaisgirren in East Prussia, frontier guards attacked by Volkssturm. Captured Germans confessed to being part of 'a sabotage terrorist group of twenty Volkssturm which the German command left in our rear areas to carry out sabotage. This group is formed from SS soldiers, SA soldiers and the police.' Samland Group of Troops.

[GARF 9401/2/94 p.46]

Up to 16 March rear areas clearance arrested '140,056 enemy elements'. Included French, Belgians and Czechs. [GARF 9401/2/94 p.61]

[GARF 9401/2/94 p.85]

Beria from Tkatchenko. 'On the morale of German people and facts of unworthy behaviour of officers and soldiers of the Red Army. We studied the morale of the German population remaining in our rear areas using our agents who work among prisoners by infiltration[i.e. stool pigeons] and as a result of interrogations. The majority of Germans regard the arrest of members of fascist organisations and the total mobilization of the population fit for work as the Red Army's revenge for the evil deeds of Germans during the occupation of Soviet territory.

German prisoners consider the formation of Volkssturm battalions as Germany's biggest mistake, particularly the fact that the Volkssturm leadership was given to the Nazi Party. There are widespread rumours that Oberpresident and Gauleiter of East Prussia Koch, tried to escape from Königsberg in civilian clothes but was stopped by soldiers who recognized him and then shot him. The relations between arrested Poles and Germans are extremely strained. There are frequent clashes. The Germans would rather East Prussia became part of the USSR than to Poland. Great fear of being sent to work in the Soviet Union.

There are rumours among arrested women that they have been rounded up for sterilization. [GARF 9401/2/94 p.86]

There are some openly negative sayings, some of which are the result of unworthy behaviour of some soldiers and officers of the Red Army who have raped German women. Many Germans declare that all German women in East Prussia who stayed behind were raped by Red Army soldiers. Resident of the town of Granz, a German Wilhelm Schedereiter declared at the filtration office that on the night of 12 February, several soldiers broke into his apartment and started to rape all the women present – girls under eighteen and old women included. His daughter Gertrude who was raped repeatedly stated that Germans in the rear of the Red Army would suffer starvation and epidemics and face repression by NKVD troops who would soon arrive.

The German Ernst Horling (b.1907) said that on 8 February his wife was raped by a group of soldiers and officers of the Red Army, that earlier he had not believed German propaganda but it had now been proved accurate by what Red Army soldiers were doing towards the German population.

It was discovered in the course of screening by the NKVD group of 43rd Army that German women from Schpaleiten and all their children had cut wrists. One of the women said that they had been promised evacuation to Königsberg. They had heard that the Red Asiatics committed unheard of atrocities, but they followed the advice of German soldiers and stayed put in Spaleiten. Emma Korn: 'On 3 February, Front troops of the Red Army entered the town. They came into the cellar where we were hiding and pointed their weapons at me and the other two women and ordered us into the yard. In the yard twelve soldiers in turn raped me and other soldiers did the same to my two neighbours. The following night six drunken soldiers broke into our cellar and raped us in front of the children. On 5 February, three soldiers came, and on 6 February eight drunken soldiers also raped and beat us. Under the influence of German propaganda which warned us of Red Army abuses and after seeing the real abuses, we decided to commit suicide and on 8 February we cut our wrists and those of the children.' [GARF 9401/2/94 p.87]

The arrested chairman of the district council of Angemonin, Jonas Wilkus, a member of the Nazi Party, said that a large part of the population had not believed the propaganda about Red Army atrocities towards the German population, but on seeing some of the excesses committed some committed suicide. The German women who lived in the attic of his building committed suicide after being repeatedly raped.

On 12 March, the NKVD chief of the 1st Baltic Front reported to Beria: 'Suicides of Germans, particularly women, are becoming more and more widespread.' [GARF 9401/2/94 p.88]

Stalin from Beria 7 March

Lieutenant General von Kurski, commander of 110 Infantry Division captured at Minsk, provided an appreciation of the situation for the Red Army. The only possible line of defence was the Oder-Neisse line. 'To shock the military potential and the defence of Germany, the capture of its capital, Berlin, will have

a great physical and moral effect. 'The quickest possible termination of the war will be impeded by England's desire to take possession of the North Sea coast.' [GARF 9401/2/93 p.325-333]

The evacuation of refugees from the eastern parts of Germany 'wird immer eines der schwärzesten Kapiteln dem an sich dunklen Buche der Parteiführung bleiben.' 'Aus reinen Prestigegründen wurden durch ihn eine rechtzeitige Evakuierung vor allem aus Ostpreussen, Westpreussen und Posen verboten. BA-MA MStG1/976 p. 62

Dadayan Sergei Akopovich b.1918. Lived in Baku, a pharmacist. Killed 2 May 1945 near Berlin, in village of Schönholz Shindel p.150 An Azerbaijani 14 March ? February Dear Mother, It's a long time since I have written as we are constantly moving. We have a short break now and I decided to write a brief letter to you. I am very well, and I am feeling very good to be on German territory. We really are in Europe. We are on the Oder river at Frankfurt. We have beaten the Germans well and corpses of these rascals are all around. We will soon be in Berlin. The only way home is through Berlin. Please don't worry about me. I don't want to write much. Greetings and best wishes and a strong kiss from your son Sergei. Shindel p.150

Chain letter calling for a general strike on 11 March circulating in suburbs of Berlin:

Hitler ist kein Deutscher.

Hitler ist geistesgestört

He was making terrible mistakes and leading them to destruction.

BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61A/336

Falkenberg evacuations. 26 February 650 evacuated another 350 'departed without warning' and 1,800 stayed behind of which 200 of trench digging. Schanzarbeiten. In case of danger another 1,000 were to be evacuated.

Refugees

'Nach feststellungen der NSV sind etwa 11 Mill. Evakuierte aus dem von Feind besetzten Gebiet ins Reich gebracht worden. Walkenhorst to Bormann, IZG-M Fa 91/5 p.1105

The 'Promi', the propaganda ministry, whose full title was Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, reports on Mundpropagandaanweisung briefing for agents to pass round.

Still claiming 17 February that Ardennes offensive had been a success.

BA-B R55/608 p.33

Goebbels acknowledged that it was no longer any use belittling enemy forces, such as saying that 'die sowjetischen Reserven erschöpft seien' or that Stalin was throwing sixteen-year olds and old men into the attack. They had to concentrate instead 'über den bolschewistischen Ausrottungs- und Schändungsfeldzug im feindbesetzten deutschen Osten'. . IfZ MA 603, p.20757

Hitler copies use of blocking detachments.

German blocking detachments. 4 February 1945

1. Behind the front line several blocking lines are to be reorganised.
2. Blocking department has the following tasks:
 - a. To collect the soldiers who have lost their units into new units.
 - b. Extra weapons with ammunition immediately transferred to newly formed units.
 - c. to screen the rears and send spare officers unteroffiziers and soldiers to the newly formed units. When screening to undertake the strictest possible measures. Leave only the driver of the vehicles (carts). Pay no attention to any objections.
 - d. Vehicles that impede movement or loaded carts are to be pushed off the road. Soldiers should be sent to their units.
3. Soldiers of blocking detachments have the right to confiscate weapons and carts and property to form new battle units. They should stand on the roads, fulfill their duties without mercy, do all they can to return each soldier who has lost his unit to the battle.
4. All officers in the position of regimental commander are military judges. They should convene a military tribunal on the spot and immediately execute every sentence.
5. Military tribunals should take the strictest possible measures based on the principle that those who are afraid of an honest death in battle deserve the mean death of cowards.
6. Headquarters of the Division should be notified immediately of the number and subject of sentences and

their execution. GARF 9401/2/94 pp.163

Kondaurov, Ivan Aleksandrovich, 4th Guards Tank Army, 1st Ukrainian Front

Aged 18. He had to stand on his toes when he came to the medical commission in Came up against Tiger. Resting on bank of a river.

December 43 as a 17-year old. Driver mechanic in that tank brigade. Trained in Urals. Rank of senior sergeant. From western Ukraine to Oder he had to change tanks five times. By the time he reached the Oder he was no longer considered the 'baby' any more. The Oder. Looks like any other river, only narrower and quieter than those of ours in the Urals, but still very dangerous for us tankists. For some reason, the Fritzes did not blow the bridge, as they had always done so far. Maybe it was mined. Behind the bridge there is the picturesque town of Steinau, and the road to Berlin lies through this town.

It was so unlike Germans to have left us the bridge. They must be waiting impatiently for us to go onto it. German must be waiting with his hand on the detonator. But we took the risk. Three of our tanks moved secretly towards this bridge. My engine roared. There was a storm of dirt thrown up behind the tank. Crossed the bridge, suddenly enemy side of river came alive and the bridge blew up behind them. The tanks rushed from side to side firing at the enemy with main armament and machine guns. Enemy tank camouflaged looked like a spider under camouflage net. Lost first one track. Then the other track blown off. 'My poor 34 was not going anywhere after that'. 'Such a shame to have a kaput in the last few dozen kilometres of the war.' Meanwhile the ringing in my ears ceased. The three of us got out and started moving towards the small hill to the west and saw tanks moving very rapidly towards us. Is that the end. There was no shelter. Then there is a cry of joy. They're ours! Found out that during the fighting when we had attracted the enemy's attention, the sappers had managed to throw another bridge across the river. Now there was only the Spree in front of us and Berlin beyond, but I was not going to reach it. I was in hospital with a piece of shrapnel. Kondaurov, Ivan Alexandrovich 'V 45-m my sami iskali protivnika'.

NKVD definitions of opponents were both obfuscating and unintentionally revealing. Any vaguely suspicious characters, including 'former' Soviet citizens were classified as 'agents of German intelligence'. Those belonging to the Armia Krajowa, for example, could have been listed under several headings, including 'members of other fascist organisations' and 'counter-revolutionary and nationalistic organisations'. The most useful accusation from the NKVD point of view was 'deserter from the Polish Army'. This of course referred to the Soviet-organized version, and anyone without military papers from their local Communist administration could be arrested. The term 'other enemy elements' actually included liberated British, American and French prisoners of war.

According to Serov's report of 29 January, 70% of those they had arrested during the period of the advance from the Vistula, including the capture of Warsaw, were Poles. Another 16% were 'traitors of the Motherland' including Vlasovites with the ROA, the Russian Liberation Army. Comparatively few Germans appear to have been rounded up at this time. SMERSH interrogated members of the Armia Krajowa, also defined as 'active participants in enemy underground organisations', to force them to reveal their arms dumps hidden from the Germans. And former Polish officers who supported the London government in exile were arrested as 'German agents'. 'active participants. . .', Beria from Serov, 29 January, GARF 9401/2/92 p.28

By mid-February the proportion of Poles arrested behind the 1st Belorussian Front reached 9,000 out of a total haul of 23,990 prisoners, but this presumably reflected the Front's advance onto purely German territory. By 16 March 140,056 'enemy elements' had been 'removed' from behind the three Belorussian Fronts and the 1st Ukrainian Front. But the mass arrest of Poles - by then 30,829 - along with Germans produced problems in NKVD jails and holding camps. 'The relations between arrested Poles and Germans are extremely strained', Beria was informed. 'There are frequent clashes.' 122,330 'enemy elements', 10 March Beria to Stalin, GARF 9401/2/93 p.352 'The relations between. . .', GARF 9401/2/94 p.86

The first priority of the Soviet authorities was to suppress all opposition to the new Communist order in Poland and its militia police. Incidents of unrest were logged. Farmers who opposed the confiscation and redistribution of land 'disarmed and tied up the chief of the militia and an agronomist, took their documents concerning the redistribution of land and disappeared'. A collective farm manager was hanged. Some of the attackers of militia posts were supposedly identified as members of the Armia Krajowa, but others were 'unknown bands'. Some accidental deaths, such as Red Army soldiers and officers suffering from alcohol or chemical poisoning after a binge might have been included in the total. Yet all in all, there is little in the NKVD troops' records to support Stalin's claim at Yalta that 212 Soviet soldiers had been killed by the Armia Krajowa.

What is striking, however, is that a report covering southern Poland at the end of January indicates the strength of the Ukrainian Patriotic Army, a violently anti-Soviet nationalist organization. 'There is an armed detachment of the Ukrainian Patriotic Army in almost every village', General Karpov, the NKVD commander of rear areas for the 1st Ukrainian Front reported to Moscow. 'People say that the bandits in the forest have artillery. A detachment of local militia said that it witnessed a parade of a thousand UPA men in German uniform. A German officer addressed them, making a speech.' Even allowing for both local and NKVD exaggeration, there is no doubt that the UPA continued a major guerrilla war against the Soviet state until 1948. The Ukrainians, who had never forgiven Stalin for the deliberate famine which killed millions, had welcomed the Wehrmacht as liberators. But the reality of Nazi rule, with their young taken off to Germany for forced labour, led to them calling the Germans 'slave traders' when they found their new masters even worse. 'disarmed and tied up. . .', 24 January 1945, NKVD 1st Ukrainian Front RGVA 32891/1/123 'There is an armed. . .', RGVA 32891/1/123 p.10. 'slave traders', Eugene Schirinkine, internee interpreter, 31.7.45, SHAT 7 P 128

The over-suspicious mind of the NKVD continued to see members of the local Volkssturm as trained commandos. South of Gross Skaisgirren, between Tilsit and Königsberg, NKVD frontier guards were apparently attacked. 'The captured Germans confessed to being part of a sabotage terrorist group of twenty Volkssturm which the German command left in our rear areas to carry out sabotage.' The report then went on to claim that 'this group is formed from SS soldiers, SA soldiers and the police.' Needless to say, SS soldiers were never part of the Volkssturm, they were regarded as far too valuable. The report claimed that these particular locals had apparently constructed bunkers in the forest with room for up to thirty men. They were well concealed by fir trees, and contained periscopes and radio transmitter. Mines had been laid on the approach and the bunkers were well stocked with grenades. 'The captured Germans confessed. . .', Beria to State Defence Committee 21 March, GARF 9401/2/94 pp.102-4

Dogs were used to help round-ups in southern Poland behind the 1st Ukrainian Front. 'An enemy group managed to break through the encirclement in the depths of the forest' the report stated. 'Senior Lieutenant

Petrinin took over command and put a search dog called Grozny onto the track of the Germans and organised the pursuit. The group began to move in a north westerly direction towards a pond. The dog led the group to the pond and at 1400 hours the dog discovered the enemy hiding in thick bushes. The enemy had sighted the group and allowed Petrinin and the dog handler to get close. They opened fire with sub machine guns. The tracker dog Grozny was killed at point blank range. The Germans retreated, but were overtaken later and the four Germans were liquidated.' Two NKVD soldiers were killed and four wounded.

Major General Zimin, the commander of NKVD troops with Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front, was not happy with the 'level of preliminary investigation' conducted in the field by both the NKVD and SMERSH. They had been ordered to compile their reports 'in a cultured, objective manner'. 'Some intelligence men did not take this order seriously enough', he continued in his general reprimand, 'and still displayed inaccuracy in their Cheka work. No effective daily control was exercised by chiefs over subordinates. In some cases the interrogation of accused prisoners was jotted down in the briefest form which fails to give a full idea of their criminal activities'. It appears that he was furious because two German prisoners had been accused as 'saboteurs'. The intelligence company of the 127th Frontier Guards Regiment had failed to 'discover that they belonged to enemy intelligence'. Such carelessness was 'harmful to our work'. 'level of preliminary. . .', RGVA 32925/1/297 p.17-18

Other problems were more mundane, such as cases of Red Army men 'poisoned by drinking captured spirits', which often meant a collective binge by up to fifteen soldiers drinking wood alcohol. Some cases of 'drinking with debauchery' resulted 'in fatal wounds'. This suggests an argument between men who were blind drunk and who then resorted to their sub machine guns to resolve it. The NKVD and SMERSH appear to have been little better than line regiments. In the 63rd NKVD Rifle Division two captains and a SMERSH major died on 22 February after a session consuming 'captured alcoholic drink'. Just over a week later three NKVD men from the 87th Frontier Guards Regiment became casualties and a fourth went blind. 'drinking with debauchery' 334th Frontier Guards Regiment RGVA 38680/1/4 p.9.

Another 'extraordinary event' took place in the 157th Frontier Guards Regiment. In the battalion command post 'there was an unrestricted listening to foreign broadcasts by persons unauthorised, a clerk and an adjutant and others'. The battalion commander was reprimanded and warned that 'if such ugly deeds' took place again, he would be removed from his position. They were fortunate. In an ordinary line regiment, such an event would have attracted a vicious reaction from SMERSH, with automatic sentences to a shtraf unit for everyone involved, even for those who had failed to denounce the listeners. 'there was an unrestricted listening. . .', RGVA 32925/1/297 p. 3.

The NKVD always preferred to settle their own disciplinary matters informally, but when the Red Army was aware of an incident, they felt obliged to take official action. On 9 March, an NKVD officer and a cypherene in a horse-drawn cart were asked to show their documents at a checkpoint manned by the 47th Army. The NKVD officer, who was 'in an unsobber condition' and incorrectly dressed, resisted and threatened them with his weapon. He was arrested and sent to the commander of his regiment. For his 'debauch and disobedience' he was sent to a shtraf company for two months. 'in an unsobber condition' RGVA 32925/1/100 p.133

On 27 March, near the town of Bublitz, when NKVD patrols were combing the area, 'an armed group of ex-soldiers and officers of the Red Army was arrested, numbering 22 men. For one and a half months they had been looting and robbing.' They included an Uzbekh lieutenant, a deserter from a shtraf company, three members of the Communist Party and one member of the Komsomol. All had deserted from the 18th Rifle Division. Deserters when caught were sent to a shtraf company 'to erase their guilt with their blood'. 'finding more deserters. . .', RGVA 38680/1/12 'to erase their guilt. . .', RGVA 32904/1/19 p.38

Amid the chaos and the drunken violence in East Prussia particularly, moments of professionalism and good

humour were a relief. Agranenko noted the exemplary conduct of German medical officers. Six doctors, including the head of the military hospital, had stayed with the wounded in Elbing. 'When this senior medical officer was asked why he had not left like all the other senior officers, he replied that medical ethics did not allow him to leave the wounded'. Agranenko inspected the hospital. It was clean. The wounded were wearing pyjamas. When we entered a ward, the man on duty gave the command: 'Stand up!'. Those who were able to stood to attention.

One soldier drew attention to himself. Soldat Klein, which means small, came from Cologne. Short like his name, unshaven and a compulsive joker, Klein had been at war since 1939. 'Ich bin Klein', he announced, pulling himself up to his full restricted height. The other soldiers laughed. Agranenko, also amused, noted that Klein was clearly the local 'Good Soldier Schweik'. The senior medical officer, however, pushed Klein aside, irritated by such levity. 'When this senior medical. . .', Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp.19

'Comrade Red Army soldiers,' read the second letter. 'I send you comradely greetings as a soldier of Stalin metallurgical plant. Comrade soldiers and officers please inform Russian slaves who are now in German captivity, comrades tell us the whole truth. What happens to civilians who had been evacuated by Germans, put into camps and then taken to military enterprises loading shells on transport and so on, what is the punishment for them? Inform us using leaflets. I have finished now. Please don't refuse our plea. Yacovlev Petr.' 'Comrade Red Army soldiers. . .', RGASPI 17/125/310 p.11

To Konev from Karpov. 29 January

A systematic check has revealed that a number of officers from the Red Army not only don't help to maintain order in the 15 kilometre rear battle zone from the front, but they are violating this order themselves. On 1 January the commander of Communications Battalion of 322 Rifle Division, forbade a detachment of 334 Front Guards Regiment from removing members of the local population who had moved back illegally. He said 'I'll call my battalion to arms and I'll disperse not only you but the whole NKVD cordon'. On 4 January Lieutenant Colonel Usov and other officers from the 76th Rifle Corps in the town of Antonuv forbade a detachment of 334 Frontiet Gds Regt to remove local residents who had illegally returned to the 15 kilometre zone. Some military commandants are just handing out passes to the local residents giving them the right to live in the territory. On 3 January 195 people who were illegally returning were stopped. The person guilty for this was Pashenko, the military commandant of Kalinovka and Laly, who was abusing his position and gives passes to the local residents who give him vodka. RGVA 32891/1/123 p.12.

GARF 9401/2/94 pp.159-165 Beria to Stalin Malenkov Molotov Antonov

3rd Guards Army captured near Guben orders of the German military command.

On treating Soviet parliamentaries. Ignored forms of international convention and 'used methods of Soviet propaganda'. Command Post of division 4 February 45.

Measures against deserters. Breslau 13 December 44

'The decisive stage for our fight for existence some cases take place when some elements who have lost their honour and dignity desert to the enemy in order to avoid fighting and preserve their pitiful lives. By doing this they not only betray their comrades, but also harm the front and rears and in the long run lives of German women and children. A true soldier who sheds his blood for the Führer, People, and Fatherland despises dishonest scoundrels and expects corresponding decisive measures to be taken against such elements and their families. On the basis of the Führer's orders, I therefore order:

1. to immediately open fire with all weapons at any soldier who is openly deserting to the enemy.
2. When there is a suspicion that a soldier has deserted, a trial must be organised on the spot, investigation should be carried out immediately and thoroughly.
3. If the fact of desertion to the enemy is established as a result of the investigation the trial must be end in a death sentence and the sentence will be approved.
4. The family of the man sentenced to death shall answer for the crimes of the person condemned with its property, freedom or life. The punishment for families is to be determined in each individual case by SS Reichsführer and chief of the German police. At the same time a copy of the sentence accompanied by the corresponding report should be sent via the relevant institutions to the OKW and the RSHA.
5. If there is no irrefutable evidence of desertion to the enemy's side, the investigation should be completed by making a corresponding report which should be sent to the OKW.
6. Units of the Division should be notified immediately of a death sentence and punishment of the family in each case.
7. This order should be read out to the troops and thoroughly explained to them.

German blocking detachments. 4 February 1945

1. Behind the front line several blocking lines are to be reorganised.
2. Blocking department has the following tasks:
 - a. To collect the soldiers who have lost their units into new units.
 - b. Extra weapons with ammunition immediately transferred to newly formed units.
 - c. to screen the rears and send spare officers unteroffiziers and soldiers to the newly formed units. When screening to undertake the strictest possible measures. Leave only the driver of the vehicles (carts). Pay no attention to any objections.

d. Vehicles that impede movement or loaded carts are to be pushed off the road. Soldiers should be sent to their units.

3. Soldiers of blocking detachments have the right to confiscate weapons and carts and property to form new battle units. They should stand on the roads, fulfill their duties without mercy, do all they can to return each soldier who has lost his unit to the battle.

4. All officers in the position of regimental commander are military judges. They should convene a military tribunal on the spot and immediately execute every sentence.

5. Military tribunals should take the strictest possible measures based on the principle that those who are afraid of an honest death in battle deserve the mean death of cowards.

6. Headquarters of the Division should be notified immediately of the number and subject of sentences and their execution.

On the evacuation of the population from the fifty kilometre zone behind the front line, dated 10 February 1945.

1. According to the order of SS troops, all women children and sick people who do not work for military enterprises or supply organisations, should be evacuated from the zone fifty kilometres west and south of the front line along the Oder.

2. Men capable of work and not working for the above mentioned organisations must stay in place to build defence works and help with supplies. All party and administrative organisations should stay too.

3. All livestock shall remain in the threatened zone.

4. Enterprises can be rendered unusable by their bosses only in the case of a direct threat from the enemy.

5. Military units should not carry out any measures of this sort.

6. Troops should preserve the houses deserted by their owners and prevent unnecessary destruction of the property of our fellow countrymen.

26-30 March clearing rear 2nd Belo by Frontier troops and Interior troops. 10,112 men. Operations led by operations groups of the Army and SMERSH departments. They searched 2,000 villages and towns and 4,690 sq kilometres of forest. 18,408 arrested of which

Red Army prisoners of war of Germans 971

Stragglers Red Army 666

Those without documents 244

Civilians

Germans trying to avoid internment 3,767

Germans without docs 97

Citizens of the USSR and allied countries

taken by Germans to Germany 4,681

Other suspicious elements 6,845

Soldiers and officers of the enemy 1,054

Soldiers and officers of allied armies 83

From the total number of the people arrested, 5,100 already screened, of which 1,427 arrested, of which German spies that are suspected of espionage 8, members of fascist orgs 893, members of the Volkssturm 360; members and cdrs of political organs, 12; traitors of the Motherland 5; other suspicious 149; GARF 9401/2/95 p.1.

When combing the area near the town of Bublitz on 27 March, an armed group of ex-soldiers and officers of the Red Army was arrested, numbering 22 men. For one and a half months they had been committing looting and robbing. A Uzbek Lieutenant Party member, senior sergeant, driver of a self-propelled gun, a junior sergeant member of the Party.

Three Party members and 1 Komsomol member. One deserter escaped from a straf unit. They all deserted in February from 18 Rifle Division.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.18-21.

Situation 11 April Clearing rear areas.

210,168 men removed. Of which

a. members of int and counter-intelligence of the enemy: 8,083

b. sabs and terrorists: 256

c. fascist orgs: 103,416

d. other enemy orgs: 13,340

members of bandit uprising gps: 2,394

cdrs and members of police, prisons and concentration camps; 3,078

military commandants: 14

prosecutors and investigators, members of mil. Courts and tribunals and civilian judges: 197

heads of dumas, local administrations and burgermeisters: 662

heads of large economic and admin orgs: 1,578

editors of newspapers and mags, authors of anti-Soviet editions: 23

cdrs and soldiers of armies fighting against USSR: 30,236

soldiers ROA: 1,830

traitors of the Motherland, proteges and helpers of the occupiers: 15,042

other enemy elements 30,019

Nationalities by Front:

2nd Baltic: 8,323

Poles 28

3rd Belo 42,817 of which

Germans 37,409

Polish 1,011

Lithuanians 1,986

Russians 1,299

Ukrainians 388

Belorussians 556

2nd Belo 86,385

Germans 58,235

Poles 19,353

French and Belgians 297

Italians 310

Hungarians 162

Czechs 46

Rumanians 52

Russians 3,440

Ukrainians 1,581

Belorussians 1,055

1st Belorussian Front 42,634

Germans 23,871

Poles 12,281

Russians 3,023

Ukrainians 2,323

Belorus 746

1st Ukrainian Front 16,743

Germans 9,566

Poles 2,782

Russians 551

Ukrainians 256

4th Ukrainian Front 13,266

Poles 2,791

[Signed by Selivanovsky former Chief of Special department of NKVD of Stalingrad Front. Senior Major of State Security].

111,372 men sent to camps. Over 290 Germans who were active terrorists, were executed on the spot.

Chapter 8 Pomerania and the Oder Bridgeheads

4 March another Panther attack on sugar factory north of Podelzig.

Also Major Graf von Albedyll, another Großdeutschland officer with local connections, he was the son of the owner of Schloß Klessin, commanded Panzergrenadier Division Kurmark armoured reconnaissance battalion. Desperate fighting round Klessin where German troops encircled.

SS code names getting more and more camp as the end approached. '1001 Nacht' Kampfgruppe set up in Bad Sarrow in January 45 with SS Jagdpanzerabteilung 560 zbV codenamed Suleika

3 Jagdpanzer kompanien

1 assault gun company.

Panzeraufklärungsabteilung Speer codenamed 'Harem' with recce vehicles, tracked motorbikes and Pak.

Company of paratroopers as infantry protection.

Oranienburg Frauen-Lager

At Morgensappell 19 February 13,253 prisoners. 150 arrived from Ravensbruck.

28 February strength 13,390 RGVA-SA 1367/1/216

Largest group working for Auer, Arado, Siemens and Henschel and AEG.

Also 150 at Königswusterhausen, 712 at Velten, 1101 at Genshagen and 638 at Henningsdorf.

Gotthard Heinrici Generaloberst Heinrici 25.12.1886 was Oberbefehlshaber 1. Panzerarmee until 19 March 45.

3 March Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes mit Eichenlaub und Schwertern. 20 March Oberbefehlshabe Heeresgruppe Weichsel.

Chapter 9 Objective Berlin

NKVD interrogations of released PoWs. Gen Stepanovic, a Yugoslav commander of gendarmerie. End January 1945. 1st Belorussian Front releases him.

He had been in Straflager X-C in Lubeck with senior Lieutenant Yacob Djugashvili. Stalin's son had shared a room with the son of the former Socialist prime minister of France Léon Blum. Windows nailed over with barbed wire. Stepanovic had approached Djugashvili to offer help, but Stalin's son had replied that he did not want his conditions to be any different to those of any other Soviet officer. Conducted himself 'independently and proudly'. He refused to stand up when German officer entered his room and turned his back whenever a German officer spoke to him. Placed in punishment cell. Despite an interview printed in the German press, Djugashvili insisted that he had never replied to any question from anyone. After an escape from the camp., Yakov Djugashvili was taken from the camp and flown to an unknown destination. [GARF 9401/2/93 p.276]

Otto Hoffmann SS Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS. Only heard that 'the Tyrol-Vorarlberg area had been declared an Alpenfestung' on 27 April. The defensive positions seemed no more than 'improvisations'. The intention of defending and keeping the Alpenfestung was secretly or openly strongly opposed by the population

The NKVD, not the Red Army, was also in charge of prison camps for ordinary Wehrmacht prisoners. Their fate that winter was terrible. In December 1944, when NKVD holding camps and hospitals contained 644,262 German prisoners, no less than 29,858 died. In January 1945, 31,544 died and the casualty rate of around 1,000 a day continued for the first twenty days of February. This occurred 'despite health measures and an improvement in living conditions and food'. Even so, it was still not as bad as the conditions to which the Germans had subjected Soviet prisoners. German prisoner of war death rate, GARF 9401/2/93 p.282

Führer Bunker

Staff officers in bunker. Sense of resignation. The feeling of 'Im tiefen Herzen auch ein bisschen das Bedürfnis überleben zu wollen.' General Ulrich de Maizière, conversation, 9 October 1999

Although he believed that Hitler was 'not a carpet-biter', Maiziere remained certain that in the last phase Hitler was deranged. Mental illness was shown in his personality. Hitler had a technical memory like a computer, and this combined with his charismatic reputation made senior officers when they came to report, uneasy and insecure. (According to Maizière, only Leeb was unaffected.)

Charisma. Despite Hitler's illness, still felt this curious force. When Kesselring told Hitler that the Western front could not be held, Hitler was very charming. He talked for an hour. Did not promise him anything.

Kesselring went off determined to try again.

In the room one would say to oneself: 'Vielleicht hat er doch recht', but then ten minutes later in the car on the drive back to Zossen, all that fell away, and one said 'Das ist doch alles Unsinn'. It is hardly believable. A demonic effect. One of the secrets of this man. If today you hear Hitler's speeches on a record from 1936, you ask how can a whole people hang on every word. Maiziere conversation, 9 October 1999

Humboldt: Zossen to the Reichskanzlei was one and a half hours drive. That journey twice a day meant that you were on the road for six hours. At night it took longer. Became too strenuous for Guderian and Krebs. From February an order that staff officers should take turns doing it every third night.

Below described his seven or eight years with Hitler completely without passion. 'Leidenschaftslos'. In prison together. A pretty boring life.

Ulrich de Maizière: la Ersten Generalstabsoffizier. He was following in an inauspicious line. His three predecessors had all been arrested by the Gestapo and interrogated in the Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. Guderian had done his best to have them released, but it had not been easy. One of them was still in SS custody and would remain there until the end of the war, narrowly escaping execution. He took up his position on 17 February. OKH was also 'Oberkommando Ost'.

Working until two, sometimes even four, in the morning. Lagevortrag, presentation of the situation. This schedule was dictated by the Führer's nocturnal bent. At three in the afternoon, the 'große Lage' took place, with many of the leaders of the Third Reich in attendance, Doenitz, Keitel, Martin Bormann, Himmler, Goering, and sometimes Goebbels or Albert Speer.

Eva Braun's sister Ilse. 'Sie war sehr nett. Schien nicht besonders nazistisch zu sein, obwohl auch sie oft bei Hitler ist.' Kardorff P.220-221/125.

Martin Bormann Diary

Wednesday 7 March. MB was in the sauna in the morning. At 1630, MB had a conversation with Dr Glasmeiern and Florian. After than MB had a conversation with Dr Nauman. In the evening Eva Braun left for Berlin with a courier train.

Friday 16 March. Conversation of MB with Schepk and Bredolf in Obersalzburg with Fraulein Josefa.

Sat 17 March. Führer receives Kaufmann and Doenitz. MB visits mines Gutshof and Durren. At noon, Frau Hapke's visit.

Sunday 18 March. MB inspects mines. MB leaves Salzburg. Via Munich to Berlin.

OKH

26 February to kleine Lage'. From Zossen. Searched by SS, before being allowed into the 'holy of holies', as staff officers called the Lage room - das 'Allerheiligste'. 17 March, Maizière accompanied Guderian. Kurland. He says Goering led him from the room. Dr Morell, the 'korpulent, höchst unsympathische'. Maizière had no idea of the existence of Eva Braun. He did not even know of her until he heard details of Hitler's suicide once the war was over. Eyesight. Special typewriters with unusually large letters known as the 'Führer-type'. Hermann Fegelein, 'puffed up, extremely self-confident and tactless', 'aufgeblasen, überaus selbstbewußt und taktlos' [puffed up Maizière, p. 104]

Chapter 10 The Kamarilla and the General Staff

63rd Rifle Division NKVD Extraordinary events Many fewer cases it would seem of self-inflicted injuries. Evidently, even the new conscripts from Belorussia and the Baltic states seemed to have learned quickly that a bullet through your own hand was the quickest route to a firing squad. RGVA 38686/1/27

Accidents cleaning weapons.

13 March. A Lieutenant replacing his pistol in his holster dropped it on the floor and he was wounded in the leg. Two cases of inattentive handling of captured weapons, two killed. Sub machine gun caught on some clothes in the camp and fired, wounding a soldier in the leg. Troops ordered to report all captured weapons and to hand them in. RGVA 32925/1/100 p.117 and 120.

'Non-military losses are very heavy due to road accidents.' Non-attention, high speed not controlled by officers and bad maintenance. Vehicles running off bridges. Many of those soldiers assigned to directing traffic run down and killed. Nine vehicles which did not stop were shot at and six people killed. 'Incorrect use of weapons'.

Outlined the 'fears of different groups of Germans'. Workers feared unemployment. Peasants feared high taxes because Germany will have to pay reparations. Owners of businesses and shopkeepers fear that their property will be confiscated. People in the towns fear famine.' TsAMO 233/2374/337 p.158

3rd Shock Army. Propaganda work with non-Russian troops, was carried out under the slogan: 'Friendship

between the peoples of the USSR'.

TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.647

Officers who were liked by their soldiers survived longer than those who were not. Apparently a psychological effect played a part here. An officer who was loved and respected by his soldiers felt more confident and more secure in battle, which is very important at the front. Bad premonitions at the front came true not only because human intuition becomes more acute under extreme conditions, but in the first place because they reflected tiredness and a certain psychological state when the physical and nervous tension over comes the permissible limit. Senyavskaya pp. 118-119

Relations between soldiers and commanders

Intermediate commanders from the reserve, engineers, teachers and people from other professions, felt more pity for the soldiers than the regular commanders and could 'evaluate the situation in a quicker and more qualified way and make the right decision'. They enjoyed more respect from the soldiers than the regular officers. [In Russia professional military men not admired for their brains]. However, one should take into account that it was the regular officers who had suffered the main blow during the first days of the war and the majority of them were killed as early as 1941. They were replaced by officers of the reserve, the people who by their consciousness and their professions, were deeply civilian, but it was they who fought the war through to a victorious conclusion. They and also boy lieutenants, who yesterday were students of accelerated wartime training, it was they who were given the affectionate name of Vanya-Vzvodnyi. [Implies a simple guy, unsophisticated] Naive in military terms.

The collective term today for military men is Vanyok. The heroes of Russian fairy tales were often called Ivan, the simple and kind ones.] But it was these boys, the closest to the mass of soldiers, that suffered the greatest losses. If the total irreparable losses of the Soviet army officers amounted to over one million men during the war, or 35% of the armed forces during the war, more than 800,00 were junior Lieutenants and senior Lieutenants, The former Lieutenant T.Zhdanovich remembers that 'they suffered the war on their own hide' in the trenches together with soldiers and this was the most difficult, you are a soldier and an officer. You have to make them go over the top and fight and you have to go yourself. And you have to make sure that you do not tremble yourself and you have to keep the others in hand.' It was particularly difficult psychologically for these younger officers to command men. And they had to gain authority. And their authority in combat could only be achieved by example, by subjecting your own life to the same degree of risk. And sometimes it would take the form of a demonstration of courage which bordered on recklessness, but there were situations when one could not do without such courage. Many soldiers who found themselves led by such moustacheless lieutenants already had grown-up children of the same age as their commanders and the relations between such soldiers and their commanders was particularly complicated.

Chapter 11 Preparing the Coup de Grâce

Chemical weapons. (See also errata and addenda). Hitler, who had been gassed during World War I, was reluctant to authorize the use of chemical weapons even though Germany had amassed a considerable

stock of chemical and nerve agents which had been tested on concentration camp victims, including a number from the camp at Natzweiler. Some 10,000 tons of bombs loaded with Tabun had been stockpiled, but by 1945, the Luftwaffe simply did not have the bombers left to deliver them. Wehrmacht commanders clearly felt that Allied air supremacy made this a crazy risk, when the Allies were in a far better position to retaliate massively. Fortunately, German scientists wrongly assumed that their enemies must have created nerve agents of the same sort as Tabun and Sarin. The Germans also had around 2,00 tons of shells loaded with nerve agents but again the Soviet artillery was so massively strong and was presumed to have chemical weaponry in shell form available that Wehrmacht commanders were opposed to their use. (See Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman, A Higher Form of Killing - The Secret History of Chemical and Biological Warfare, London 2002, pp. 62-3).

Refior: Mein Berliner Tagebuch

18 March, on leave. Telephone rang. Told that 'mit sofortiger Wirkung' he was appointed chief of staff of the Berlin defence area. He did not of course imagine that this particular job would take him from home for just over ten years. Oberst i.G Hans Refior BA-MA MSg 1/ 976 p.1

Rumours in diplomatic circles in Berlin. Hitler to Bavaria, but Bavarians thought not to be reliable, so he should stay in Berlin. New government with the name 'Committee for the Safeguard of the European People' with new names, uncompromised characters. Idea to surrender and negotiate. Hitler does not know about these plans. KA, Försvsstabn, Utrikesavdelningen KA-FU, EI: 18 vol.6

Stomach battalions and stomach divisions.

Nerves, above all suppressed nerves produce gastric disorders. German command refused to accept that shell-shock existed, but it seemed to regard gastric disorder as a sort of erstaz shell-shock. This was one of the reasons for posting those complainif gastric pain to stomach battalions and divisions in the army rear areas. NA RG 338 B-275

Berlin defence area became an 'orphan', because neither OKH, dealing with the Ostfront, nor OKW would take responsibility for it. ['orphan',BA-MA MSg 1/ 976 p.15]

12 April Soviet artillery began to range in on certain targets. Colonel General Heinrici acknowledged at the end that he was implementing a 'sinnlosen Selbstmordbefehl'. . BA-MA MSg1/976 p.141

General Reymann answered 'heatedly' that 'Bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt hätte er den Krieg als anständiger ehrenhafter deutscher Offizier bestanden; sein Sohn wäre vor dem Feind gefallen; Heimat und Besitz hätte er verloren. So wolle er wenigstens seine Ehre behalten. Er wies vor allem auf das Schicksal jenes Pionieroffizier hin, der im Westen die Rheinbrücke bei Remagen nicht rechtzeitig gesprengt hatte. Wie ein ehrloser Verbrecher sei dieser Offizier hingerichtet worden, sein Name damit für alle Zeiten geschändet. BA-MA MSg1/976 p.120

SA der NSDAP 30 March 1945

Schuetzenstandarte 3

STANDARTENBEFEHL

Meine Kameraden

Unsere engere Heimat steht im Geschehen des Kampfes. Grosse Schreibereien sind jetzt überflüssig. Ihr haltet Eure Männer zusammen und setzt diese dort ein, wo es das Gebot der Stunde verlangt. Denkt immer daran - wo Ihr auch stehen moeget - dass wir die Sturmabteilungen des Fuehrers sind und, wenn auch alle Herzen schwach werden, wir nochmals und nochmals zum Angriff übergehen. BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61C/9

Volkssturm: not partisans. 'The German leadership firmly rejects the underground and underhand fighting methods which our enemies have adopted in many theatres of war. The German Volkssturm has nothing in the least in common with partisan fighters'. [Klemperer, 24.10.44, p.455]

In February soldiers getting six cigarettes a day each. [Letter to parents from Josef Kaufmann.] Almost as obsessed about tobacco as about rations. Few letters. Hardly any paper. On sentry duty thinking of home, especially those whose families were trapped in enemy occupied territory. 'Ich muß nur allzoft an Euch denken, wenn ich so in der Nacht allein auf Posten stehe und zu den Stellungen des Iwans hinüberstarre.' Killed on 14 April east of Golzow.

Diary of Fahnenjunker Siegfried Jürgs born 1917 in Hamburg. Had been in Hoch- und Deutschmeisterregiment in Stalingrad Kessel. Evacuated by air. The Fanenjunkerschule was sent to the Oderbruch as Regiment 1239.

16 March each one issues with a rifle and a Panzerfaust. 'Als ich damals verwundet aus Stalingrad ausgeflogen wurde, dachte ich, nun ist wenigstens für mich alles vorbei. Wie ich irrte. Es sieht schlimm aus.' [Ramm p.158]

1April: 'Wir sind total erschöpft. Mitterweile haben wir schon x-mal Auffrischung bekommen. Wir schanzen, schießen, rennen mal vor und dann wieder zurück. Jeden Abend sind wir weniger und am Morgen sind wieder neue Gesichter in den Kompanien, weil nur noch nachts die Straßen und Bahnlinien befahren werden können. Schäfer und Langgusch sind gestern gefallen.'

11 April Wulkow bei Strausberg: 'Jetzt sind nur noch Feix, Borchelt und ich übrig von denen, die einst hier mit dem Transport gelangten.'

14 April. 'Heute mußten wir Hänschen Borchelt im Gutsпарк begraben, es war, als ging ein Stück von mire, so viele Jahre haben wir Freud und Leid geteilt.'

Dönitz also used enemy broadcasts. He quoted the president of the Moscow Law Institute on the definition of war criminals. Apparently, 'alle Deutschen vor Gericht gestellt werden, die gestohlene russische Ware in Empfang nahmen, sowie die deutschen Bauern und Bürger, die nach Deutschland deportierte russische Zivilisten als Arbeitskräfte verwandten.' And the radio station of the Moscow controlled Lublin government for Poland had proclaimed on 4 March that 'Ostpreußen, Pommern, Westpreußen und Schlesien' belonged to a Poland which would extend to the Oder. Little better could be expected from the British, he warned, referring to 'die Haßgesänge des britischen Premiers'. 'the songs of hate of the British prime minister'.

IfZ MA 127/2 p.12962

Situation 11 April 1945. Clearing rear areas.

210,168 men removed. Of which

- a. members of int and counter-intelligence of the enemy: 8,083
- b. saboteurs and terrorists: 256
- c. members of fascist orgs: 103,416
- d. members of other enemy orgs: 13,340
- e. members of bandit uprising groups: 2,394
- f. commanders and members of police, prisons and concentration camps; 3,078
- g. military commandants: 14
- h. prosecutors and investigators, members of mil. Courts and tribunals and civilian judges: 197
- i. heads of districts, local administrations and burgomasters: 662
- j. heads of large economic and admin orgs: 1,578
- k. editors of newspapers and mags, authors of anti-Soviet editions: 23
- l. commanders and soldiers of armies fighting against USSR: 30,236
- m. soldiers ROA: 1,830
- n. traitors of the Motherland, proteges and helpers of the occupiers: 15,042
- o. other enemy elements 30,019

Nationalities by Front:

2nd Baltic: 8,323

Poles 28

3rd Belo 42,817 of which

Germans 37,409

Polish 1,011

Lithuanians 1,986

Russians 1,299

Ukrainians 388

Belorussians 556

2nd Belo 86,385

Germans 58,235

Poles 19,353

French and Belgians 297

Italians 310

Hungarians 162

Czechs 46

Rumanians 52

Russians 3,440

Ukrainians 1,581

Belorussians 1,055

1st Belorussian Front 42,634

Germans 23,871

Poles 12,281

Russians 3,023

Ukrainians 2,323

Belorus 746

1st Ukrainian Front 16,743

Germans 9,566

Poles 2,782

Russians 551

Ukrainians 256

4th Ukrainian Front 13,266

Poles 2,791

[Signed by Selivanovsky former Chief of Special department of NKVD of Stalingrad Front. Senior Major of State Security].

111,372 men sent to camps. Over 290 Germans who were active terrorists, were executed on the spot. GARF 9401/2/95 p.18-21.

'In future', Beria ordered, 'the removal of enemy elements should be limited to the following categories: spies and terroristic agents of German intelligence organs, members of all organizations and groups left in the rear of the Red Army by the German command; persons who keep illegal radio sets, depots of weapons, illegal printing sets; active members of the National Socialist Party; leaders of regional and municipal authorities, leaders of fascist youth organizations; members of Gestapo and SD and other punitive organisations; editors of newspapers and magazines and authors of anti-Soviet publications.' Gave order to stop sending so many prisoners to the USSR and to organise the necessary number of camps and prisons on the spot. [overfilled camps in Russia] To send back to the USSR only those of operational [military and intelligence] interest. To review the evidence concerning all the arrested people from the above mentioned categories.

Important Poles arrested by NKVD 1st Belorussian Front . Adam Valentinovich Ben, born 1899, lawyer, minister of the Polish underground govt, the first deputy of the chief delegate of the London émigré government in Poland.

Interrogated Stanislav Ignatievich Yasyukovich, born 1882, minister of Polish underground govt and also deputy chief delegate London émigré government in Poland. Interrogated and 'he named 29 other members of the leaders of the Polish underground.'

General Leopold Okulitsky, born 1898, commander Armiya Kraiova, interrogated. He had met on 5 January Colonel Hudson flown in to near Pilitsa river, to the east of Radom, where a detachment of AK was based. Hudson asked him to organise meetings with reps of the underground gov and the 'illegal parliament'. But this could not be done, because this area had been occupied on 15 January by troops of the Red Army and on 17 February on the request of the British Embassy in the USSR, we brought them from Poland to Moscow. And in accordance with the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, they were handed over to the British Military Mission in the USSR.

Colonel Hudson British Colonel with Poles [check with PRO] February 1945. 'We have information that Hudson and members of his mission are part of the sabotage intelligence department at the ministry of economic warfare, SOE. At the present time, Hudson's group is in Moscow and is preparing to leave for England.'

Stanislas Merzva, member of central committee of the Peasant Party. 'which refuses to acknowledge the Provisional Government and fully supports the London Government'. Opposes the land reform measures.

Sittings of the underground parliament which took place in February near Warsaw at a secret address. Eastern frontiers of Poland debate. After the liberation of Poland by the Red Army, local military organisations of the Peasants Party began to carry out propaganda against the Red Army.

Poles very unhappy at Crimean conference decisions on Curzon line. No participation of Poland. GARF 9401/2/95 p.253-268 Beria to Stalin etc

Report from the 83rd Frontier Regiment with 1st Ukrainian Front on Red Army deserters. Order to check carts with Red Army soldiers more carefully. 1st Ukrainian Front 24 March enemy broken groups reforming in rear. Claims from NKVD rifle regiments that parachutes being dropped. RGVA 32891/1/120 p.72

17 April In the woods round Oppeln to the east of Berlin and north of Gross Strelitz, small troops of German paratroopers are operating whose aim is to spy and to commit sabotage. RGVA 32891/1/120 p.96

Desertion just before big battle. 1st Ukrainian Front. 20 April. RGVA 32891/1/120 p.141. Deserters from Red Army arrested. 83rd Frontier Guards Regt. Deserter reported that in the village of Jungfernsee, two groups of Red Army deserters are hiding, eleven men altogether, who had deserted from different regiments of the Red Army. They formed groups, sometimes they pretend to be guarding bridges, sometimes they pretend to be collecting forage for their regiments. Group sent to arrest them, surrounded the house at 7 a.m. to find one of the deserters cooking food. They seized this man, and entered the next room where other deserters were having a rest. So they took all their weapons and ammunition and after that Lieutenant Nikiverov ordered 'Get up!' Seven deserters were arrested. When arrested the leader of the group, a Senior Sergeant

of the Red Army said: 'You were lucky to have found us asleep, because otherwise you would not have taken us alive.' This group then said where the other group was living. They encircled the house and found two deserters in the kitchen and entered the room where they found a resting group of deserters. Thus fifteen deserters have been arrested in total. Jungfernsee, a village on the edge of forest.

5 May NKVD report on April 1945. 'deserters from the Red Army in the rear areas who are looting and raping the German population and disorganising the commandant's control of small vilages and towns. A great number of the civilian population from different countries and liberated prisoners of war from German camps are now heading for the deep rear areas. A lot of criminal elements are concealed within these masses. A great many German civilians who had previously fled westwards with the German army from territories near the border are now trying to return home. And agents and saboteurs are moving among them.' From Karpov and Maj Gen Zubarev chief of NKVD troops rear areas 1st Ukrainian Front to Lieutenant Gen Gorbatyuk chief of main dept of NKVD Troops of guarding the rear areas of the Red Army. RGVA 32891/1/120 p.248

On 8 April, a group of NKVD trainees obtained a bottle of methylated spirits. Two died on 8 April and another died on 9 April. So the people who were guilty of organising this debauch are now dead. RGVA 32891/1/125 p.253.

26 April Cpl Prokofiev and Markov, the the man responsible for rations, from 334 Frontier Guards Regiment, organised a drinking party which ended in an argument between Prokofiev and Markov, and Prokofiev killed Novikov by shooting him in the head. RGVA 32891/1/125

Reports of 30 parachutists night of 6/7 April. 9 April one captured. Captain taken. 'We are searching for the other 29'. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.239

New draft. Virtually untrained soldiers press-ganged during the advance through 'western Belorussia' did not look happy. Political officers described them as 'reserved and always silent' and observed that they did not 'really feel at home among the Russians'. This is hardly surprising, since most 'western Belorussians' and 'western Ukrainians' were in fact Poles. Their speech betrayed their lack of identification with the Soviet Union, which they referred to as a foreign entity. 'One hears them say: "When we were freed by the Soviets", or "When the Soviets came".' But Red Army officers also 'saw them as foreign' and 'their section commanders always curse them'. Some Poles, it seems, wanted to reply with a grenade lobbed in the direction of their tormentor. These new conscripts did not always take well to the new discipline. A soldier from the 3rd Artillery Regiment objected to morning exercises 'as if we were sheep'. Another openly praised the old Polish Army. And when one Pole was caught asleep on duty by an officer, he retorted: 'I'm not afraid of anything. Before the war I spent a few years in jail and I don't care if you arrest me.' [TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.314]

SMERSH intervened on any examples of 'anti-Soviet agitation', such as when individuals from Belorussia praised German order.

Redeployment of 1st Belorussian Front for Berlin Operation.

For example when 47th Army and the 3rd Shock Army were withdrawn and handed over to other units, there were only one or two units left in the front line. Only one night was needed to regroup the sector.

To speed up regrouping, the commanders took advantage of the weak activities of the enemy in certain sectors. Brought armies onto new axis, leaving only the lightest covering forces.

1st Polish Army so skilful in regrouping. Regrouped in night of 7 April. Withdrawn from front line on Pomeranian coast and during the next night, two days before troops had arrived to replace them, started moving down to form up on a new axis. An infantry Division and a cavalry brigade left behind to defend the coast.

Tracked vehicles brought up by rail. Germans had not had time to destroy the railways in Pomerania and Silesia.

KOMSOMOL

TsAMO 236/2675/440

Komsomol work. Discussing Stalin's Order No.5. Working with reinforcements. In the 4th Guards Tank Army, Komsomol organisations were to prepare the young conscripts for battle 'and to make them part of the Guards family'. Komsomol activists also lectured them on the achievements at home and the heroic attempts to rebuild the Motherland. They were told how 'Komsomol member Mischa Galkin worked three machine tools simultaneously and over-fulfilled his norm by 350%'. After hearing this, the brigade Komsomol members swore: 'We promise to destroy Hitler's lair using all our strength and skill. We will hurl powerful and terrifying fire at Hitler's bandits and we will take our revenge for all their evil deeds committed on our territory.'

Gribov, Yuri: 'Igral nam v Brandenburge grammofon....' in Stroki s velikoi voiny, Moscow 2000

How we made a bagna on the Oder, and Lieutenant Nemytov [unwashed] was so scared that he ran into the forest. We were in defence positions in trenches, whole days like moles, and then it started to rain and there was even more mud. Then the chiefs ordered us to wash all the soldiers so that they would be clean when they advanced to Berlin. Two medical orderlies Yegorichkin and Belugin together with the administrative section, organised a bagna in the building of a half-destroyed station at Zigerik and although the jokes centred on the family name of Lieutenant Vasia Nemytov. We barely had time to start enjoying it, started scrubbing each other's backs when Belugin, frightened to death, flew in, and ordered everyone to run to the trench because an aircraft was circling overhead. Suddenly, we heard a crash. The explosion blew the door out and the remains of the ceiling fell down. Some of us had time to grab their underwear and others did not. We rushed into the trench and the naked Nemytov ran into the forest because he was particularly scared of aircraft. He was a nice chap but he could not stand bombings. After that there were many jokes at his expense. We even wanted to wash him in the Oder. At that time I commanded a machine gun platoon and with our Maxims, we were sent to Lieutenant Borisov's company and we soon became friends with him. Our defence line ran from the turn of the road and ended near the railway bridge which had been blown up and that time I commanded a machine gun platoon and with our Maxims, we were sent to Lieutenant Borisov's company and we soon became friends with him. Our defence line ran from the turn of the road and ended near the railway bridge which had been blown up and the rails and the bridge piers were closer to the German side of the river. During the night Borisov went to the bridge to check on his soldiers. Once I asked for permission to go with him. We were crawling along the bridge, because from time to time bursts of tracer fire flew over the bridge and somewhere behind we could hear the sound of mines exploding. We could already tell the type of machine gun by the sound. If the burst was sharp, like a piece of cloth being torn, that meant that the modified MG42 was at work, firing up to 1,500 rounds per minute, a beast. Our Maximushka fired only 250 rounds

per minute. Two soldiers were positioned near a crumpled railway wagon, protected by an iron shield. They had a light machine gun and a dozen grenades. 'So how are you today?' Borisov asked in a low voice. 'At the moment, Comrade Lieutenant, you can speak normally. Dieter and Walter have gone to have their supper and they will soon be back. We have studied their routine thoroughly and even know their names.'

'What's the distance between you and them?'

'Precisely twelve metres, comrade Lieutenant. They are behind a wagon, just like ours. They smoke stinking tobacco, the scoundrels. When the wind blows the smell in this direction it makes us feel sick. We can hear how their scrape their spoons in the mess tins.'

'Have they ever tried to creep up on you?' the Lieutenant asked.

'Oh no. Their song seems to be sung.'

'Come on guys', said Borisov. 'You should be vigilant, especially when it rains.'

'Of course! It seems to me that the brave boys are on their way back. Dieter! Walther!'

'Jawohl!' we heard from the other side.

'Oh come on, Svirkov. What fraternising with the enemy!'

'This is the third year that I've been 'fraternising' with them, Comrade Lieutenant. The bastards have shot me in the chest twice and I nearly died in hospital. You should take the corporal in hand as Siderov feels in his guts that the corporal doesn't pour the full amount.'

'What? He doesn't pour you enough soup?'

'If only it were the soup, but it's the sacred inviolable thing. Oh you'll have it Svirkov and Siderov too.'

On our way back, Borisov and I did not know what to laugh about. Whether Siderov feeling in his guts about the sacred drink poured or about the fraternising with the enemy.'

In Germany in October 1944, sixteen-year-old boys had been called-up for service. On 4 March, the government called up those fifteen year-olds born in 1929: 'Im Ubrigen erfüllt es uns mit besonderem Stolz, daß die Hitler-Jugend im Nahmen der Verteidigung der Reichshauptstadt ebenfalls ihre Aufgaben zugewiesen bekommen hat.' BA-B R55/916 p.134

The examples of 'unhealthy and incorrect sayings' reveal an advanced state of paranoia on the part of political officers. In the 33rd Army, they were horrified when a soldier digging a bunker was heard to say: 'Does Comrade Stalin know that we have so few soldiers to hold this part of the line?' A soldier, who made the 'totally unfounded complaint' - 'Pea soup all the time. When will the food get better?' - was lucky not to have been charged with anti-Soviet agitation. ['unhealthy and incorrect. . .', report 19 April, TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.316]

Political officers were nevertheless optimistic. They claimed that the only thought which worried a soldier was the idea that the western allies might beat them to Berlin 'and my mother won't allow me to come

home'.

TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.669

Reinforcements also came from 'liberated' territories annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, such as Moldavia, 'Western Ukraine' and 'Western Belorussia' (i.e. eastern Poland) and Lithuania. Some soldiers were former Belorussian partisans who had been incorporated en masse into the Red Army. Only those under sixteen were exempt. 'Moldavian and Lithuanian soldiers had received some military and political training in reserve formations.' These 'non-Russian soldiers were accepted in our family', with political officers selecting 'interpreters to work on them in their own language'. Meetings were conducted under several slogans about friendship, including the rather revealing one: 'The Russian people is the elder brother of the peoples of the USSR'.

The 'western Belorussians' and 'western Ukrainians' insisted on speaking Polish. Some groups of Poles, who were told that they could not join the Communist Polish Army, and that they were Soviet citizens serving in Soviet divisions, went on strike. Their leaders were 'sent to SMERSH' and the revolt was crushed. Poles were very 'undisciplined' and 'in the political sense, they were very backward'. Moldavians were forced to sing Soviet songs because the political officers did not understand their language and therefore 'could not control their ideological content.' Rumanians drafted into the 1st Ukrainian Front had no uniforms, and arrived wearing 'shoes made of wool and leather', which led to them being mocked by Red Army soldiers. 'The Russian people. . .', TsAMO 236/2675/267 p.8 Belorussian partisans, Jack Kagan, conversation, 9 May, 2000 'sent to SMERSH', TsAMO 372/6570/76 and 372/6570/68, quoted Senyavskaya, 1941-1945 Frontovoe pokolenie, p.108

Political departments implicitly excused their lack of success on the grounds of the diversity of the material which they had to refashion. For example in the 8th Guards Army, 'the reinforcements for the 57th Guards Rifle Division included 519 Russians, 100 Ukrainians, 120 Belorussians, 384 Moldavians, and 41 persons of other nationalities.' Almost all the Moldavians had been forcibly transferred from the Rumanian army, a number of them having fought against the Red Army in southern Russia. Yet of the 4,000 draftees for the 4th Guards Rifle Corps as a whole, no more than 87 had seen action before. 'the reinforcements for the. . .', TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.669

The 1st Ukrainian Front also held 'revenge meetings' to recount the atrocities committed against the Soviet people. These were organized whenever possible at the graveside of fallen soldiers. In the town of Gross Gablow, captured by the 117th Guards Rifle Division, a prison was liberated. The regimental political officer, Major Klimov, arranged for all political officers to visit the prison, where on the walls of cells, cyrillic letters in blood spelled out the message: 'We have been looking forward to seeing you, but it is too late.' 'We have been looking forward. . .', TsAMO 236/2675/267 p.67

Chapter 12 Waiting for the Onslaught

Ehrenburg voicing Soviet resentment against Western Allies

'American tankists are enjoying excursions in the picturesque Hartz mountains' [Krasnaya Zvezda, 11 April 1945, p.3]

The Germans the Americans encountered, Ehrenburg joked bitterly, were surrendering 'with fanatical persistence'.

'Germany is dieing miserably, without pathos or dignity. Let us remember the pompous parades, the Sportpalast in Berlin, where Hitler used to roar that he was going to conquer the world. Where is he now? In what hole? He has led Germany to a precipice, and now he prefers not to show himself.'

'Germany does not exist; there is only a colossal gang ['Khvatit', Krasnaya Zvezda, 11 April 1945, p.3]

The Allied outrage at German execution of prisoners of war, yet nothing was said about the fate of millions of captured Russian soldiers. 'The grief of our Motherland, the grief of all the orphans, you are with us in these days of victory and fan the flame of intransigence. . .

This is why Germans fear us so much. This is why it is easier to capture ten towns in Westphalia than one on the Oder.'

'We know that not all Germans are Fascists but war is war.' Man to wife letter. [Senyavskaya, p.264.]

Most Red Army soldiers believed that it was impossible to change from 'an enemy beast' to an enemy human. They were mad dogs who had to be killed. The image of the fascist beast had also been boosted by German propaganda because the Nazis saw themselves as supermen and were barbaric to other people.

Russian veterans tend to remember the change in the party line from the moment they crossed the German border at the end of January, but this appears to be either a personal or collective rewriting of history since documents of the political departments show clearly that the change did not come until just before the final part of the Berlin operation. Short rest on a country estate near Flansburg, near the old German-Polish border. 3rd Shock Army. Political officers say to them at Flansburg: 'Now that war had moved to German territory, it was necessary to change political attitudes', wrote one officer. 'I saw how kindly our soldiers treated women children and old men. At first people were very surprised to have such treatment.' Klochkov,p.35

Harriman in Moscow warned the Secretary of War on 11 April of a new departure in the Soviet press. For the very first time the Soviet Tass news agency focused on the western front. It described 'the absence of any serious German opposition, the great numbers of Germans who were eagerly surrendering'. 'In general the Allied advance is depicted as a high speed military parade through Germany with cheap victories at every crossroad.' The exact Soviet tactic is hard to define at a time when the Party line was in a state of flux. This approach may have been intended to put more pressure on Zhukov and Konev to achieve rapid results. NA 740.0011 EW/4-1045

'As is their frequent practice, the Russians throughout the war have been advancing two conflicting theses towards Germany.' Ehrenburg and Aleksandrov. NA 740.0011 EW/4-1445

Averell Harriman, the US ambassador in Moscow, immediately signalled to the Secretary of State to comment on this 'article of high importance'. He thought that the Soviet propaganda needed to be able to explain to its audience why the Allies had advanced so fast. Yet the Soviet leadership was not being cynical in this case. It was absolutely convinced that the Germans were playing a trick. Harriman was, however, right when he surmised that the Soviet leadership was looking beyond the end of the fighting to the moment when it would have to win over the population of a future occupied Germany.

Dulles and Wolf

On 27 March, Donovan warned the State Department that Ernst Kaltenbrunner was also contacting Allen Dulles in Bern. The Austrian SS leader, Hoettel who was Kaltenbrunner's 'right hand man in Vienna', also went to see Dulles on two occasions. He said that the SS wanted to launch a coup against the Nazi Party and the small minority within the SS itself which wished to continue the war. When this was done, the the SS could 'arrange for an orderly transfer of administrative functions to the western powers'. Hoettel even talked of opening the western front to the Americans and British, while German troops there were switched to the east.

NA 740.0011 EW/3-2745

Marshal Stalin to President Roosevelt.

Stalin twisting any sense of guilt that he could. The unofficial German overtures through Switzerland and the number of German divisions on the eastern front in comparison to those facing the western allies. 'They continue to fight savagely with the Russians for some unknown junction Zemlianitsa in Czechoslovakia which they need as much as a dead man needs poultices, but surrender without any resistance such important towns in central Germany as snabruck, Mannheim, Kassel. Don't you agree that such behaviour is more than strange and incomprehensible.' 7 April, NA RG218 Stack 190 2/15/3 CCS/JCS UD47, Box 15 File 94

Stalin wanted to make the Americans squirm by going back to the fiasco of February, when General George Marshall informed General Antonov that the Germans were about to launch two offensives: one from Pomerania towards Torun and the other from the Moravska-Ostrava region towards Lodz which was to include the 6th SS Panzer Army. The major blow, it then turned out, was a very heavy armoured attack with the 6th SS Panzer Army near Lake Balaton in Hungary. It was then hinted that this inaccurate information may have been intentional disinformation 'to divert the Soviet command from the region where the principal offensive operation of the Germans was being prepared'. Ironically, it is much more likely that this blunder was due to the United States reliance on Magic intercepts of Japanese diplomatic signal traffic. What may well have happened was that Ribbentrop was once again misinformed on military intentions, and he had then passed this to the Japanese ambassador. NA RG218 Stack 190 2/15/3 CCS/JCS UD47, Box 15 File 94

The armies are so far from the Soviet Union that even the best radio receivers can pick up Moscow radio with difficulty. Moscow newspapers arrive here very late. Officers have a lot of radio sets, mainly German makes, made to tune into German stations, while in the towns which the army has taken, such as Katowicze, there are radio transmitters which could be used to retransmit Moscow radio. GARF 9401/2/95 pp 48 1st Ukrainian Front from Mechik to Beria

Red Army's bad radio discipline

Orders forbidding messages in clear were ignored. This allowed the enemy to intercept a number of important messages. On 7 April, the Germans reported an intercepted message in which the leading team of one of the divisions of 1st Polish Army stated that it needed enough petrol for 450 kilometres. A conversation of the commander of the tank and mechanized troops of 2nd Belorussian Front, intercepted by a fascist agent, became a source of information on the troops of the 1 Guards Tank Army, commanded

by General Katukov, regrouping to the Oder, as well as the 8th Guards Mechanized Corps, commanded by Major General Dremov. Undoubtedly the discovery of this regrouping was helped by the strategic situation at the end of March. By this time, liquidation of the enemy in 49th, 65th and the 17th Army, on the coast of the bay of Danzig, was finishing and it was clear to the fascist commanders, that these armies would take part in delivering the final blow against Berlin.' No sub-units were allowed to use the radio. The set had to be on receive, never on send. TsAMO 500/12451/122 p.197

Commandant service responsible for the 'exact and regular movement of the troops', and provided headquarters with the necessary information on regrouping. TsAMO 422/220918/2 p.250

Troops used all methods of camouflage and all the experience accumulated during the course of the war. Germans did not spot change of armies from Danzig area to further south. German air reconnaissance spotted on 8 April, the fourth day of 4th Guards Tank Army move, observed 'intensive movement of motorised columns' of 4th Guards Tank Army from north west from Lignitz. TsAMO 500/12451/122 pp. 88-89.

'Neglect of camouflage measures by a number of commanders' 'low standard of camouflage discipline'. For example, in spite of the order to move only by night, the troops of the 4th Guards Tank Army continued to move by day. In the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps commanded by Colonel Koretsky, the bulk of two brigades continued moving until 12.00 and 15.00 on 8 April, and the remaining forces were moving during the whole day. TsAMO 6gv.mk/204147/10 p.95

Alpenfestung theory. Japanese signal traffic interception. Oshima reported to Tokyo that on a visit on 7 April to German Auswartiges Amt he had been told: 'Although it has been our policy to keep the German Supreme Command and Government in Berlin, in view of the changes in the war situation the occasion may arise in which we would move the German Government temporarily to Southern Germany.' NA RG334/Entry309/Box2

US passing Magic material to USSR. 4 April Oshima told by German Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs von Steengracht:

'With regard to the morale of the German units on the Western Front, while it is to be surmised that some among the encircled units are depressed in spirits, on the whole I think there are no signs of demoralization.' Gen Marshall to Gen Antonov.

Message to Eisenhower from Marshal Stalin on 1 April. 'I have received your telegram of 28 March 1945. 1. Your plan to cut the German forces by joining up the Soviet forces with your forces entirely coincides with the plan of the Soviet High Command. I agree with you also that the place for the joining up of your forces and the Soviet forces should be the area Erfurt, Leipzig, Dresden. The Soviet High Command considers that the main blow of the Soviet forces should be delivered in that direction. 3. Berlin has lost its former strategic importance. The Soviet High Command therefore plans to allot secondary forces in the direction of Berlin. . . . The beginning of the main blow by the Soviet Forces is approximately the second half of May.' For good measure, Stalin ended with a twist of the moral blackmail of Soviet sacrifice. '7.

As regards enemy troops on the Eastern Front, it has been established that their number is gradually being increased. In addition to 6 S.S. Tank Army, the following have been transferred to the Eastern Front.: three divisions from Northern Italy and two divisions from Norway.'

From Deane.

NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Deane wanted to give more information: 'Through such discussion we hope to obtain a much clearer picture of his reactions and of his intentions than would have been the case had we merely sent your message to Stalin through the usual channels.

Eisenhower hoped for a teleprinter communication between headquarters. He also asked Stalin 'Could you therefore tell me your intentions and let me know how far the proposed operations outlined in this message conform to your probable action.'

Americans felt that they could divorce military affairs in the war against Germany from politics. The Soviet regime exploited this at every opportunity.

Capture of Remagen bridge caused a 'paralysis' and the Wehrmacht 'offered no more organised resistance except in the extreme north and south'. SHAT 7 P 102

National Redoubt. Seventh Army and OSS still convinced in report 14 April. In fact the tone of the report is so factual that it appears to be based on solid information when in fact it was merely misplaced speculation. The Redoubt would be centred on Berchtesgaden, the report claimed confidently and be defended by 100,000 SS troops. General Ostendorf had drawn up all the plans for this Alpine defence. Werwolf groups would operate under SS Obergruppenführer Skorzeny. The report even stated categorically that 'there is enough food for ten million people for two years on the basis of 1,500 calories per person per day.' SHAT 7 P 102

Slave workers from Soviet Union and British Officer

'I entered one farmhouse where the Soviet 'slave' workers were paraded for my benefit by the farmer who told me how much better off they were here than in their own country. These Russians were certainly cheerful enough and looked as well looked-after as our own Italian prisoners of war doing similar agricultural work. But in answer to my query they all said that they wished to get back home. This annoyed the aged German farmer who snapped at them to take their hands out of their pockets when talking to an officer.' [Elliott, p.136]

Etat-Major General 2e Bureau

Map showing Reduit National Allemand. Whole of western Austria southern Germany and the extreme north of Italy just below the Brenner pass. Believed that it could be extended eastwards to cover most of central Austria. (extracxts from a study by American Seventh Army dated 25 March. SHAT 7 P 102

A German officer captured in Italy stated that troops from Italy had been ordered to fall back into Austria to form an Army Group defending the redoubt. 'Himmler gave the order in February to prepare rations for 100,000 men in the Vorarlberg'.

American military intelligence was convinced that Hitler's decision to keep the Sixth Panzer Army in the south close to Vienna, rather than bringing it north to help defend Berlin, 'even after the loss of Silesia, East Prussia and Pomerania', strongly supported the case for the 'German National Redoubt'. The fact that Sixth Panzer Army was trying to defend last oil fields left on German occupied territory ignored by Americans.

Messerschmitt factory within the Redoubt near Garmisch-Partenkirchen

'In Berlin the population now hopes that the Allies will reach Berlin before the Russians and that makes the atmosphere more hopeful.' KA, Försvarsstaben, Utrikesavdelningen KA-FU, EI: 18 vol.6 28 March

Locations of Twelfth Army headquarters

12 -21 April Pi-Schule Rosslau

Medewitz Hütten 22km NE of Zerst

Pritzerbe

29 Genthin

30 April-5 May Klein Wulkow 10ks. NW Genthin

6 May-7 May Klietznick 11ks. NW Genthin

12 April. 'Am 12. kamen die ersten Alarmnachrichten von Übersetzversuchen des Feindes bei Schönebeck und Barby, Druck auf Magdeburg.' Attempt to counter-attack with a battalion and a few assault guns on the following day. Battalion of Scharnhorst. Fierce resistance on first day. But they found the enemy, especially the US Air Force, far too strong.

Saturday 14 April.

'The Ninth [U.S.] Army has occupied Wittenburg a hundred kilometres north of Magdeburg. To the south east of Magdeburg, other infantry elements have crossed the river at Kameritz.' 'Three battalions of the 83rd Infantry Division have crossed the Elbe at Kameritz to the south-east of Magdeburg. The 2nd Armored Division came under heavy artillery fire to the south of this town.' [SHAEF daily report on Allied Operations on the Western Front, SHAT 8 P 19]

Sunday 15 April

Ninth Army

XIX Corps 'To the south of Magdeburg, the Elbe bridgehead follows the general line: 2kms. south east Breitenhagen to 18kms to west-north-west of Dessau; 2 kms west Zerbst-Gehrden, Dornburg-Gommern and Randau (to 6 kms to the south east of Magdeburg. A very strong enemy counter-attack was repulsed yesterday at Toppel (3 kms north east of Zerbst).

XIII Corps 'The evening before, in the area of Stendal, the 5th Armored Division reached the Elbe on a front of 25 kms.

Mid-April. Simpson of Ninth Army pleaded with Eisenhower, saying that from the Elbe, he could reach Berlin in a day. Eisenhower refused, apparently fearing casualties. General George Patton, who had backed up Simpson's argument, still persisted. 'Ike, I don't see how you figure that out', he said. 'We better take Berlin and quick – and on to the Oder!' Eisenhower answered that Berlin, with its wrecked buildings and civilian population which needed to be fed would be more of a liability than an asset. 'Who would want it?'

'I think history will answer that question for you', Patton replied bitterly.

14 April Hitler issues his order of the day, to be passed down to company level.

'Soldaten der deutschen Ostfront. Zum letzten Mal ist der jüdisch-bolscheviste Todfeind mit seinem Massen zum Angriff angetreten. Er versucht Deutschland zu zertrümmern und unser Volk auszurotten.' They were urged to think what fate lay in wait for German women and children. 'Während die alten Männer und Kinder ermordet werden, werden Frauen und Mädchen zu KasernenHuren erniedrigt. Der Rest marschiert

nach Sibirien.' Claimed that new emergency units and Volkssturm were strengthening the front and that 'Der Bolschewist wird dieses mal das alte Schicksal Asiens erleben, d.h. er musz und wird vor der Hauptsatdt des Deutschen Reiches verbluten.

'Wer in diesen Augenblick seine Pflicht nicht erfüllt, handelt als Verräter an unseren Volk.'

'Berlin bleibt deutsch. Wien wird wieder deutsch und Europe wird niemals russisch.'

BA-MA RH 19 XV/ 9b. p.34

1st Ukrainian Front

RGVA 32891/1/125P.290 'cases of desertion do not stop either. In April 183 deserters were arrested, [52nd and 21st Army] usually individuals, but also some groups. They find transport and food, select a leader and then hide in the rear areas of the Red Army. Some groups hoping to stay in an area pretend to be part of the military administration. It was also noticed often that these groups of deserters gradually became bandits, found weapons robbed the local population, raped women etc. For example on 5 April 1945, two deserters were arrested near Omburg who said that they belonged to a group of eight deserters and hoped to move deeper into the rear areas of the Red Army. On their way they robbed and raped. The group was headed by a corporal masquerading as a lieutenant.

14 April. Colonel Eismann at Army Group Vistula rang Lieutenant Colonel de Maizière at OKH. He told him that Ninth Army believed 'daß man morgen mit dem Beginn des Großangriffe rechnen'. BA-MA RH 19 XV/ 9a

To Army Group Vistula 10 April

On 10 April, Krebs sent two lots of Hitler's instructions to Army Group Vistula on how to run the battle. The first point was: 'Der Angriff in die Flanke eines fdl Angriffskeiles ist das alleinige Mittel zu einem durchschlagenden Abwehrfolg zu kommen. Geschickter ansatz und Schnelligkeit in der Durchführung bieten die Möglichkeit der Überraschung und damit den Erfolg auch gegenüber starkerem Feind'. BA-MA RH 19 XV/ 9a p.193

Some points were contradictory, so that one suspects that he wanted to be able to say when things went wrong, that they had not followed his instructions. Himmler interfering too on 13 April, wanting to make sure that SS reserves were earmarked for Steiner's III SS Corps 'Germania'.

Himmler peace feelers. SS Obergruppenführer Wolff, when challenged by Himmler on what he was up to in Switzerland, answered that 'he was acting pursuant to the Führer's recent secret order to seek any possible contact with the Allies. [Donovan to Sec. Of State, 1 April NARA 740.0011 E.W./4-145]

In November 1944, Arthur Axmann, the leader of the Hitler Youth, issued an order that the whole of the

Hitler Youth was to be educated for Werwolf. Girls from the Nazi BDM were also recruited, and a Frau Lafontaine in Berlin was appointed national organizer for women. A special Hitler Youth Werwolf school was opened near Bonn. Möckel, the Deputy Reich Youth Leader, was in charge of recruiting Hitler Youth in western and south-west Germany for Werwolf until he was killed in a car accident near Darmstadt in late February.

Goebbels insisted that he was in charge of all Werwolf propaganda, and the transmitter remained under his control until the very end. Goebbels, like other Nazi leaders, wanted a 'partisan-struggle', despite having endlessly described partisans in the Soviet Union as criminals. Bormann tried to bring Werwolf under Party control through the Gauleiters. He had a meeting with Prützmann on 1 March, then met with Kaltenbrunner and Sepp Dietrich that evening, where the project was almost certainly discussed further.

Möckel, NARA RG 260 OMGUS, Stack 390 41/7/5-6 A2/S4 'Partisanen-kampf'

By 13 March, the US Counter Intelligence Corps had identified 82 different training camps. These had been set up under the control of Kaltenbrunner, the head of the Reich Chief Security Department. There was even an SS Werwolf training school attached to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where Morse, demolition, weapons training and fieldcraft were taught. And SS Jägerbattalion 502 received special training in the Berlin Lichterfelde barracks of the SS 'Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler'.

According to Otto Skorzeny when interrogated later, the battle school of Jagdverbände North West situated just north of Neustrelitz, trained over three hundred recruits, a tenth of whom were young women. This was the camp where English-speakers had been prepared to disrupt the allies' rear areas during the Ardennes offensive. It did not just train Germans, both from the Reich and outside: Flemings, Danes, Dutch, Hungarians and other nationals with extreme anti-Communist beliefs were put through the course. The Nazis were making use of those without hope, those who had lost their homes and their countries. French fascists, mostly Vichy miliciens, were trained in the south-west at Badenweiler. More women saboteurs were taught at the Besekow training school at Sigmaringen close to Marshal Pétain's enforced residence. German sabotage and intelligence schools. NA 319/11/XE001063; 'special emphasis . . .', SHAEF int summary 24 April NA RG 260 OMGUS, Stack 390 41/7/5-6; see also SHAEF intelligence summary of 24 April, NA RG 260 OMGUS, Stack 390 41/7/5-6 A2/S4; NA 319/8/XE070687

Hauptmann Wolfram Kertz, a commander of a Grossdeutschland guard battalion and a holder of the Knight's Cross, was put in charge of the 'Moabit alarm unit' in the 309th 'Berlin' Division. He had few illusions left and suffered from a 'terrible resignation', while his young soldiers, who lacked any sort of 'Kampfmorale' or ideology, stayed in their trenches only because they were too scared to desert. Conversation Wolfram Kertz, 11 October 1999

Soviet loudspeaker and leaflet propaganda may have had little effect on the Vlasovtsy - they had no illusions about their fate, whatever the promises - but it certainly managed to influence some German troops. The 7th Department of each Army headquarters produced 'Greetings from prison' leaflets, signed by German prisoners of war, to assure them that they would be well treated. Placards were also erected which could be read from German trenches. 'Soldier if you want to survive, then join us'. 'Prison is the quickest way home.' 'Turn your weapon against Hitler and his clique and save your life'. German officers were clearly fearful of the effect on morale. They ordered their mortar detachments to fire at these placards, even though they were very short of ammunition. Fifty bombs were apparently aimed at a placard proclaiming: 'Hitler has lost the war'. One political officer had a very clever idea. Whenever they put up propaganda placards, German officers ordered them to be destroyed with machine gun fire or mortar

bombs. So this time he he put a picture of Hitler on the placard with the line: 'Hitler is a murderer - Fire at Him!' 'Soldier if you want. . .', TsAMO 236/2675/339 p.89 'Hitler is a murderer - TsAMO 233/2374/337 p.67

Some political officers of the 1st Ukrainian Front even tried to make local peasant women cross the lines to persuade soldiers to surrender or desert. Soviet propaganda had become far more sophisticated since German Communists were brought into their operations in the winter of 1942. One of the most effective leaflets read: 'Papa, don't do anything silly. Come home and save your life'. This was inspired by the success of one prepared over two years before at Stalingrad, which showed a little boy crying 'Papa is dead', and the body of a dead German soldier in the background. 'Papi, don't do anything. . .', TsAMO 233/2374/337 p.150

US wanted to use 'war weary U.S. bombers to be launched against industrial targets in Germany, each bomber to be loaded with some 20,000 pounds of high explosives and set on course to its target with an appropriate timing device to determine its flight duration.' No.728 of 29 March, President to PM

British vetoed plan on grounds that Germans would retaliate against London. Roosevelt was not happy and continued to argue for it. 'Combat experience with this weapon on the Continent will make possible the most effective use of this type of weapon in the battle against the highly concentrated areas of the Japanese homeland.' Churchill asked to ask his Chiefs of Staff to reconsider.

[GARF 9401/2/96 p.11-12]

During the three days from 9 March to morning of 12 March the estimate by Front staffs of enemy captured is 697,000 men, including 47 generals. Of the total, 82,000 men are in assembly areas, while the remaining 615,000 have not yet been passed to the NKVD by military units. According to NKVD and Front staffs, the total including those not yet transferred to NKVD reaches 2,070,000. Captured Germans represent 1,300,000 of the total.

Chapter 13 - Americans on the Elbe

The confusion of cause and effect continued apace in the highest reaches of the Nazi leadership. Großadmiral Dönitz argued 'daß in unsere Lage Kapitulation Selbstmord ist', but then went on to say: 'Vertrauen wir rückhaltlos der Führung Adolf Hitlers. Glauben Sie mir, ich habe in den zwei Jahren meiner Tätigkeit als Ob.d.M. nur erlebt, daß der Führer in seinen strategischen und operativen Ansichten immer recht gehabt hat. . . Sehr oft kam die Erkenntnis, daß der Führer mal wieder recht gehabt hat, erst nach Wochen. Dann war es aber meistens zu spät.' IfZ MA 127/2 p.12954

GARF 9401/2/95 pp 31-35

14 April Beria to Stalin etc passed on from Serov's report of 12 April from 1st Belorussian Front . Attitude of soldiers 1st Polish Army towards forthcoming meeting with soldiers from Anders army.

In connection with the rapid advance of the Allies on the western Front, unhealthy moves developed among the soldiers and officers of the 1st Polish Army serving with 1st Belorussian Front concerning the forthcoming meeting with troops of the Anders army. Intelligence organs of the 1st Polish Army have discovered and taken under control nearly 2,000 ex-soldiers of the Anders army and members of the Armiya Kraiova and soldiers who have close relatives in Anders's army. The persons who are listed above, spread various rumours about the forthcoming meeting with soldiers and officers of the Anders army. The most characteristic feelings are as follows: Senior political officer of the 1st Sapper Brigade, Karpinski, Nartsis, born in Lodz, stated in a conversation with soldiers and officers of the 1st Company, I heard the other day on the London radio that Anders has accepted command of the whole Polish Army and will join up with us. I think that Anders will be a good military leader. A large part of the people present agreed with what Karpinski said. Karpinski is registered by the information department as hostile to the existing Polish government.

Informer reports: 'Anders army is coming to Berlin from the other side with the English Army. When the Polish troops meet up, the majority of our soldiers and officers will pass over to the Anders army. We've suffered enough from the Soviets in Siberia.' 'Hostile attitude'.

A platoon commander in 10th Battalion, to his soldiers. Many others make similar remarks, cross over as soon as they have the chance.

***Plan to conceal their addresses so that their families would not suffer from reprisals.

A battalion chief of staff to informant (former member of Anders army): 'After the war, when Germany is finished, we'll still be fighting with Russia. We have three million members of Anders's men with the English.'

We all have relatives and friends in Anders's army.

Fear of activities of ex-members of Armiya Kraiova. Gun commander in 2nd artillery brigade. 'They are pushing their "democracy" into our faces. As soon as our troops meet up with Anders's men, you can say goodbye to the temporary government. The London government will take power again and Poland will once more be what it was before 1939. England and America will help Poland get rid of the Russians.'

Armiya Kraiova will fight for a certain time and then we'll go.

Serov blames commanders of 1st Polish Army 'for not strengthening their political explanatory work'. The commander of 1st Polish Army addressed us. Serov: 'Before we go into action, it is necessary to remove under different pretexts all soldiers and officers who speak in favour of Anders's army and against the Provisional Government.'

'1st and 2nd Polish Armies must perform a thorough search for radio receivers and remove them to make it impossible to listen to transmissions from London.'

Continued GARF 9401/2/95 pp 91 Serov to Beria 19 April

In accordance with your orders of removing radios from soldiers and officers of the Polish Army, we have carried out the following: the commander of 1st Polish Army, Lieutenant General Poplavsky, issued an order on 15 April asking his men to hand over all their radios by 20 April and not take any more radios from then on. On our order, the information organ is controlling the fulfillment of this order'. [the installation of radios sets in cdrs buildings where instructions and approved news can be listened to.]

An operations officer from the main information department is sent to the 1st Ukrainian Front to the place where the army is deployed to organise the removal of radio sets from the 2nd Polish Army. I will keep you informed of the number of radio sets removed from both armies.

Important Poles arrested by NKVD 1st Belorussian Front . Adam Valentinovich Ben, born 1899, lawyer, minister of the Polish underground govt, the first deputy of the chief delegate of the London émigré government in Poland.

Interrogated Stanislav Ignatievich Yasyukovich, born 1882, minister of Polish underground govt and also deputy chief delegate London émigré government in Poland. Interrogated and 'he named 29 other members of the leaders of the Polish underground.'

General Leopold Okulitsky, born 1898, commander Armiya Kraiova, interrogated. He had met on 5 January Colonel Hudson flown in taken nwear Pilitsa river, to the east of Radom, where a detachment of AK was based. Hudson asked him to organise meetings with reps of the underground gov and the 'illegal parliament'. But this could not be done, because this area had been occupied on 15 January by troops of the Red Army and on 17 February on the request of the British Embassy in the USSR, we brought them from Poland to Moscow. And in accordance with the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, they were handed over to the British Military Mission in the USSR.

Colonel Hudson British Colonel with Poles February 1945. 'We have information that Hudson and mebers of his mission are part of the sabotage intelligence department at the ministry of economic warfare, SOE. At the present time, Hudson's group is in Moscow and is preparing to leave for England.'

Stanislas Merzva, member of central committee of the Peasant Party. 'which refuses to acknowledge the Provisional Government and fully supports the London Government'. Opposes the land reform measures.

Sittings of the underground parliament which took place in February near Warsaw at a secret address. Eastern frontiers of Poland debate. After the liberation of Poland by the Red Army, local military organisations of the Peasants Party began to carry out propaganda against the Red Army.

Very unhappy at Crimean conference decisions on Curzon line. No participation of Poland. GARF 9401/2/95 p.253-268 Beria to Stalin etc

GARF 9401/2/95 pp 48 1st Ukrainian Front from Mechik to Beria

The armies are so far from the Soviet Union that even the best radio receivers can pick up Moscow radio only with difficulty. Moscow newspapers arrive here very late. Officers have a lot of radio sets, mainly German makes, made to tune into German stations, while in the towns which the army has taken, such as Katowicze, there are radio transmitters which could be used to retransmit Moscow radio.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.253-268 Beria to Stalin etc

Clearing rear areas up to 15 April

Of those sent to NKVD camps 148,540, barely one half can be used for physical labour.

In future the removal of enemy elements should be limited to the following categories: spies and terroristic agents of German intelligence organs, members of all organizations and groups left in the rear of the Red Army by the German command; persons who keep illegal radio sets, depots of weapons, illegal printing sets; active members of the National Socialist Party; leaders of regional and municipal authorities, leaders of fascist youth organizations; members of Gestapo and SD and other punitive organisations; editors of newspapers and magazines and authors of anti-Soviet editions.

To stop taking to the USSR the people who were arrested as a result of clearing the rear areas of the Red Army and to organise the necessary number of camps and prisons on the spot {NB overfilled camps in Russia] To take back to the USSR only those of operational interest. To review the materials concerning all the arrested people from the above mentioned categories. [Round up the usual suspects].

To release people who are unfit for physical labour and concerning whom there is no evidence of harmful activities. And send them to their homes in an organised manner.

Rear Areas Operations

A German when stopped, pretended to faint. The NKVD controller noticed that he opened one eye to have a glance and arrested him as a spy. April. RGVA 32891/1/125

7 April officers from the political department of 58 NKVD Rifle Division found a bottle of some liquid in the ruins of a pharmacy, thought that it was spirits and drank it. After that they felt very ill. And started to vomit and gasp. A junior Lieutenant was badly poisoned and died after twenty four hours. RGVA 32891/1/125 p.321

Letters home. Dadayan Sergei Akopovich b.1918. Lived in Baku, a pharmacist. Killed 2 May 1945 near Berlin, in village of Schönholz.

8 April

Dear Mama-gian, I have decided to write to you today. You begin each one of your letters by asking why don't I write. I don't understand. I write letters. I send money and parcels, but you don't seem to be getting anything from me.

Mama-gian, don't be upset with me. I have written many times and I don't want to worry any more. You should know very well, that as long as I am alive and healthy, I am first of all yours and only then my wife's and all others. Please remember it. I was brought up this way and I will not change.

I am very happy to the bottom of my heart when in Germany, not far from Berlin, I received your letter which told me that Shurik Smirnov is alive. When I read it I was beside myself with joy. That is a great joy for the family and for Luba. Sasha writes to me often that she wants to put Igor into the kindergarten. Well, what can be done in this case, it is probably poor little Igor's fate. I am sorry for him. Although I have not seen him I have a great feeling of love for him and that is why I am very sorry for him. Well, it's not so terrible. It's not going to last much longer.

We'll be the first into Berlin. We'll hoist the victory banner over it, destroy the fascists and come home triumphant.

Let me stop now. Greetings to Vazgen, the children, Aunt Lida, Uncle Georgi, Aunt Luba and everyone. A big, big kiss to you, Mama-gian, your son Sergei.

Shindel p.151

Sebelev Petr Mitrofanovich 1941 commanded a company near Yelnya, commanded a battalion near Moscow. In 1945 a Lieutenant Colonel, chief of staff of 2nd Sapper Bde. Finished war Berlin.

16 April 1945

Papa Mama Shura and Taya, We have never had such a day at the front as today. At four o'clock in the morning, thousands of Katyushas and mortars started firing. And along the whole length of the horizon it was as bright as daylight. On the German side, everything was covered with smoke and thick fountains of earth in clumps flying up. There were huge flocks of scared birds flying around in the sky, a constant humming, thunder, explosions. We had to cover our ears to prevent our eardrums breaking. Then tanks began roaring, searchlights were lit along all of the front line in order to blind the Germans. Then people

started shouting everywhere: 'Na Berlin!' And today nobody thinks about death as if it never existed. All they think about is to break into Berlin as soon as possible. And so tanks, men, guns and vehicles - all started moving forwards. We made ten kilometres during the day. We left behind a lot of German trenches and fortifications. We moved across terrain cratered from shellfire. There were smashed German guns, vehicles, burning tanks and many corpses everywhere. Our men picked them all up and dragged them all to a place to be buried. The weather is overcast. It is drizzling and our ground-attack aircraft are flying all over the German front line from time to time. Many of the Germans surrender. They don't want to fight and give their life for Hitler.

You're right about difficulties with food. That's no surprise: the war. [Men at the front could be unsympathetic about the genuine suffering at home]. I sent you a parcel. Many of us are now sending parcels home and commanders send parcels to families of some soldiers and officers. Good bye. Kisses to all of you. Your Petr.

Shindel, p.160

Mesaures against looting. 'Each Communist had to report on cases of looting in villages'. TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.457

Vigilance was urged against the 'cunning methods of the enemy'. Soldiers were warned that stocks of alcohol and food were almost certainly poisoned and must not be touched until they had been tested. (This was, of course, a vain attempt to prevent binges. Although the Germans left plenty of explosive booby-traps, there were few cases of deliberate poisoning.)

The political department of the 1st Belorussian Front deplored the drunken driving, especially by officers, and the number of accidents shortly before the great offensive. The second in command of the 1455 Rifle Regiment who had allowed the issue of vodka before the approach march was put in front of a military tribunal. [1455 Rifle Regiment, TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.288]

'A captured corporal from 359th Infantry Division said that Soviet propaganda is good, but it does not achieve its goals because soldiers are conscious of the fact that it was Germany which started the war and that it will be treated in the same way as it treated Russia.' TsAMO 236/2675/339 p.80

An SS division opposite the 21st Army [1st Ukrainian Front] was identified as 'the least stable' because it consisted 'almost totally of Hungarian, Austrians, and Italians from the South Tyrol', with Germans as the officers and NCOs. A captured Hungarian told his interrogators that there were 'special detachments of German unfit to fight placed 500 metres behind the front line'. They were ordered to shoot anyone trying to retreat or desert. If this is true, then it underlines the way the Nazis wanted to copy the ruthlessness of Soviet measures in 1942. 'A few days ago', the Hungarian recounted, 'a company commander, with his own hand, shot an Austrian and a Hungarian who tried to desert.' TsAMO 236/2675/339 p.81-2

'Many [German] soldiers hope', the 7th Department of the 21st Army reported, 'that if the front collapses, they may be able to escape in the confusion and reach their families.' TsAMO 236/2675/339 p.80

14 April attack to increase Kustrin bridgehead. On 15 April at 15.30 LVI Panzer Corps took over 9 FJD, 20 Panzergrenadier Division and Müncheberg Panzer Division. 9FJD's 25th FJ Regt near Letschin, 26th Regiment west of Zechin and 27th Regiment either side of Gusow. On the eve of the great attack, the artillery ammunition reserves were so low that all available trucks were sent back to Müncheberg to fetch more shells, but at the depot there were only 75mm shells, which were useless to most batteries. 'Six rounds per day per gun'.

13. Little red flags made by the Komsomol organization in each division. 'By the time the advance began, each regiment had at least 30 small flags.' TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.648

General Shatilov received banner No.5, while the 171st Rifle Division received banner No.4 and 207th Rifle Division received banner No.6. Just before the offensive.

'The American [sic] newspaper "Daily Mirror" and "Sydney Daily Telegraph" have published reports by Pirson [sic] from Washington, claiming that leading American patrols were in Berlin on the 13th of April, and had to withdraw due to the protest from Stalin, who declared that an agreement had been reached previously that the Russians would be the first to take Berlin. Americans withdrew because the Russians insisted that they fulfill the agreement. TASS has been authorized to declare that the report by Pirson is absolutely false and is a complete fabrication.'

Eve of battle emotions

No, it did not seem more terrible to die in the end of the war, and those who were afraid were the most likely to be hit by bullets. Captain Shota Sulkhaniashvili 1st Byelorussian Front, 3rd Shock Army. Quoted Russian proverbs such as : 'Even death is beautiful when you are surrounded by other people'. 'One person in the field is not a warrior'.

Meeting 14 April at eight in the evening at Stavka headquarters : Antonov reacted to a line in a 12 April letter from Eisenhower on avoiding confusion and clarifying identification of allied forces which stated: 'The division of responsibility should be defined by boundary lines to be agreed upon between groups of armies'.

Antonov inquired if this indicated any change in the zone of occupation previously agreed upon by our respective governments. He was assured that the reference was to tactical areas and that no change was implied in the zones of occupation. Antonov requested that confirmation be obtained from Eisenhower on this point.'

Antonov indicated that he understood that upon completion of tactical operations the Anglo-American forces would withdraw from the previously agreed Soviet zone of occupation. Eisenhower confirmed through the US military mission on 16 April.

'Even those of us who had heard heavy bombardments before in the great battles to free the Motherland had heard nothing like this.' Vladimir Samoilevich Gall, (Captain, 7th Department, 47th Army Headquarters) conversation 2.11.99

Night of 15/16 April Germans opposite listen to tank tracks. Earth shook like in an earthquake. 'der Boden wie bei einem Erdbeben wankte'. The searchlights 'die weißen Pulverwolken gespenstisch zu erleuchten'. p. 293

'nicht mehr diese Welt, das war Wahnsinn' p.293

Gefr. Hermann Hesse 712th Infantry Division artillery. XI SS Army Corps. 20 year old evacuated from the Kuban with malaria. Sent to western front on 'convalescent duty'. Division had retreated from northern France the previous autumn and had fought the parachute landing at Arnhem. Battery commander a senior high-school teacher Oberleutnant Stephan. Had fought in upper Silesia, defending industrial areas. Almost entirely destroyed. 16 April. Shell stockpiles hit by air and artillery attack near Alt Zeschdorf, west of Lebus. Gun crews had only uncovered slit trenches in which to shelter during air attacks. Not bunkers.

Dropping emergency supplies to Allied prisoners of war 27,000 estimated at Neu Brandenburg. Night drop. Russian commanders warned. NA RG334/Entry309/Box 16 Meetings with the Soviets.

'Of course it would have been better to wait five or six days and to start the operation simultaneously with three fronts, but as I said above, Stavka took into account the operational and political situation and could not delay the operation.' Zhukov iv p.228

Stalin suspicions Oder

Harriman 8 April reports that that day Izvestiya and Pravda wondering at ease of US Brit advance 'whether or not some definite aim were concealed behind activities of German Command in the West'. NA RG59 740.0011 EW/4-845

Any German soldier who knocked out more than one armoured vehicle received a 'Sonderabzeichen für das Niederkämpfen von Panzerkampfwagen durch Einzelkämpfer'. BA-MA RH19/XV/24 p.119

Chapter 14 Eve of Battle

In true National Socialist style, Himmler issued an order of total resistance to all military commanders. 'No German town will be declared an open city. Every village and every town will be defended with all possible means. Any German who offends against this self-evident duty to the nation, will lose his life as well as his honour.' 'No German town. . .', BA-MA RH19/XV/9b p.131 'Keine deutsche Stadt wird zur offenen Stadt erklärt. Jedes Dorf und jede Stadt werden mit allen Mitteln verteidigt und gehalten. Jede deutsche Mann, der gegen diese selbstverständlich nationale Pflicht verstößt, verliert Ehre und Leben.' BA-MA RH19/XV/9b p.131

A ludicrous and quite grotesque inconsistency in notions of duty or sacrifice. When Eva Braun innocently mentioned to Hitler that his surgeon, Dr Brandt, had moved his wife and child to Thuringia, he had ordered to her horror that Brandt be charged with treason and sentenced to death. Speer had taken similar precautions, yet nothing happened to him. Brandt's execution, however was postponed due to a missing witness. Speer wrote later that Himmler 'of all people' - assured him privately that this witness would never be found. 'of all people', Speer, quoted Sereny, p.505

Bormann Diary GARF 9401/2/97

Sunday 15 April. Conversation of MB with Reckman. After lunch on the Führer's order, had a conversation with Eva Braun, Dr Malz and Dr Stummfager about the case of Professor Brandt. [Brandt was arrested the next day. He had been the Reich Commissioner for Health and Sanitation after being sacked in October 1944 as one of Hitler's personal doctors, because he had suggested that the Führer was suffering from strychnine poisoning as a result of Dr Morell's pills. Brandt was accused of moving his family from Berlin to Bad Liebenstein so that they would fall under American jurisdiction.]

Chapter 15 Zhukov on the Reiwein Spur

3rd Shock Army a linesman, during a day of heavy firing, repaired severed signal cables eleven times, even though he had been wounded twice.

Crossing the Oder.

A company commander in the 23rd Guards Rifle Division was killed during the crossing, a woman political officer, Ludmilla Kravets, took command. With the cry 'Forward for the Motherland and Stalin!' she leaped, pistol in hand, into the cold water as they reached the far bank. For her bravery, she was made a Hero of the Soviet Union. TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.648

Among the German units facing the 1st Ukrainian Front on the Neisse was the 500th Strafbattalion made up partly from deserters captured by the Feldgendarmarie, but also soldiers heard speaking against Hitler's regime, or those caught sleeping on duty. Harsh measures by the German authorities did little to stem the tide of deserters, in fact the more vigorous the repression behind the lines, the more soldiers crossed to the enemy. No less than 25 men from the 500th Straf regiment deserted in one group. German soldiers on their own or in groups would cross over shouting in pidgin-Russian: 'Ivan don't shoot, we are prison.' TsAMO 236/2675/336 p.55 and p.6.

Hand to hand fighting in trenches. Neisse. One soldier is said to have strangled a German machine gunner with his bare hands.

'Antonov stated in meeting 16 April that the Russians have begun a reconnaissance in force along the entire central sector of front. Will forward immediately any information relative enemy dispositions as it becomes available.' NA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Eisenhower wanted to know whether the Red Army General Staff would prefer to have our advance stop along the Elbe. 23 April. NA RG334/Entry309/Box 16

Chapter 16 Seelow and the Spree

Eberswalde 19 April. Battalion 16/122 3rd Company. Whole Volkssturm to assemble 'Dir Kompanie tritt am Sonntag, d.22.4 um 7.30 Uhr auf dem Kompanie-Alarmplatz an. Ende des Dienstes 11.30 Uhr. 'Das vorgesehene Scharfschiessen mit Karabiner findet nicht statt. . . In letzter Zeit mehrten sich die Meldungen über Unglücksfälle von Volkssturmmännern beim Umgang mit hochexplosiven Sprengkörpern, (Panzerfaust, Minen und der gleich). Es ist bedauerlich, dass hierbei fast ständig Todesfälle zu verzeichnen sind, eine Tatsache, die heute nicht tragbar ist, zumal diese Verluste nicht im Kampfeinsatz entstehen.' BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61A/38

Scandinavian SS

Ostuf. Langendorf reported [Ramm, p.97.] 'Russian infantry advanced further into the wood and overran our infantry screen. Only the Pak held them off. A small group of SS gunners launch a counter-attack. Langendorf was lightly wounded in the arm and back was taken back to Truppenarzt and then back to the Corps field hospital. This was 20 April. Heard Goebbels on the radio: 'Wien wird wieder deutsch und Berlin bleibt deutsch!' The surgeon working on him said only 'Na dann mal ran!' 'Now we'll let them have it'. Nurses from Holland, Flanders and Denmark but mostly Norwegians were caring for the wounded arriving. 'Unvergeßlich ist mir der Vorgang, als eine junge norwegische Schwester unter den Schwerverwundeten ihren Freund erkennt.

3rd Guards Tank Army

Battalion commander Shchukin led his tanks in an attack on the village of Götterfelde, but it was strongly defended with several assault guns. Shchukin managed to hit one of them with his first round. He then ordered his driver to reverse rapidly, and they went round the outside of the village to cover the road on the far side where the German defenders were already starting to pull out. He had three easy shots against lorries carrying away infantry, but then one of the self-propelled assault guns fired and set his tank on fire. Several German soldiers ran forward with panzerfausts, to finish it off. Shchukin continued firing 'for as long as the heart continued to beat in his young breast'. Other tanks came to the rescue 'and the enemy was destroyed, but the heart of the warrior was not beating any longer'. TsAMO 236/2675/440 p.53]

German reinforcements

Reached Berlin in troop train at Wünsdorf to find Russian tanks shooting at the train. 'Alles ist Hals über Kopf aus den Waggons gesprungen und hat sich in Wünsdorf bei der großen Panzer kasernen wieder gesammelt.' Thrown together as a scratch company. Myth that German aircraft manned by German Communists shot them in the back. 'Es waren getranke russische Maschinen des sogenannten "Kommittee Freies Deutschland".' Ramm, p.211

'Les liaisons entres entre français et allemandes sont, malgré interdictions, menaces et punitions, fréquentes.' Although these relationships were romantic rather than political, they were none the less motivated by an interest in 'ravitaillement'. Male equivalent of the French women who slept with Germans but the men of course did not have their heads shaved. They were enviously congratulated by their comrades. Three years prison for the men and four years for the German woman. Some French denounce their comrades in the hope of getting early release. SHAT 7 P 128

South of Frankfurt, the SS '30. Januar' Division had suffered heavy losses. In the village of Wiesenau the 34th SS Polizeiregiment was decimated. In one house alone a direct hit had killed twelve men and wounded another fifteen. The streets were littered with their corpses, and one company commander, Obersturmführer Fischer, suffered a nervous collapse.

The advancing troops of the 1st Belorussian Front did not just seize items that could be militarily useful. It was not long before the usual problem of looted alcohol arose in Soviet ranks. The capture of 'several liquor-producing enterprises and depots' had led to 'many cases of drunkenness'. On 17 April, a battalion commander of the 102nd Guards Rifle Regiment and a Hero of the Soviet Union, 'got very drunk, and could not conduct the battle. He lost his battalion.' The commander of 35th Guards Rifle Division was reprimanded for not having taken the necessary measures to prevent an alcoholic binge. The situation was made worse when 'some officers, instead of arresting the soldiers who were stealing and drinking, joined in'. Not surprisingly, they were 'not in a state to fulfill their combat duties'. 'several liquor-producing. . .', TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.35

An officer organizing the defence of a village on the line of retreat even grabbed a war correspondent among other stragglers. 'Am I supposed', he said pointing to the 7.5mm pistol on his belt, 'to defend the Great German Reich with this?' He was sent to the Gasthaus where a weapons sergeant handed him a foreign rifle, one of those taken early in the war, and five rounds of ammunition. Heinz Heering, BA-MA MSg 2/3448 pp.6-7 'Soll ich etwa hiermit', he said pointing to the 7.5mm pistol on his belt, 'das Grossdeutsche Reich verteidigen?'

Chapter 17 The Führer's Last Birthday

Evening of 21 April

In Prague restaurant. 'Fisch in gelee, Rübensalat, für Fett- und Brotmarken gebratene Kartoffeln mit schmackhafter Tunke gereicht, Cocktails aus Kräutersäften und sogar kleien Gläser roten Weins. Sense of unreality at what was going on around Berlin.

On Wenceslas Square 'Soldiers stroll with dubious girls, German and half-German, officers return salutes as casually as usual.' 'Soldaten flanieren mit fragwürdigen Mädchen, deutschen und halbdeutschen, Offiziere grüßen kaum flüchtiger als sonst'. Diary Uffz. Heinrich V., 21 April, BZG-S.

20 April Falkenberg completely evacuated. Food merchants ordered to ensure that all foodstuffs were removed. It was the last time the burgermeister used his Gemeinde Falkenberg stamp with the Nazi eagle. BLHA Pr. Br. Rep. 61A/336

Chapter 18 The Flight of the Golden Pheasants

21 April capture of Stuttgart II Corps 'cleaning up operations'. Ulm cleared by I Corps and VI US Corps.

In Baden-Württemberg, a Vlasov division left the camp of Münsingen on 20 April in the direction of Memmingen in Bavaria. 'Its route was marked by much pillaging in the towns along its route'. [Interrogation of Major General Kuen, report of 2e Bureau of 25 April SHAT 7 P 102]

Berlin Artillery

From 21 April to 2 May, 1,800,000 shells fired by Red Army in fighting in Berlin, 36,000 tons of shells.

'It was difficult to express in words the excitement that overwhelmed Soviet warriors. This what a commander of a gun 6th battery of 832 artillery regiment of 266 Rifle Division, Senior Sergeant Nikolai Vassil'ev recounted: 'It was close to nightfall when our battery reached the heights and we saw the huge city. A feeling of joy and exultation overwhelmed us. This was the last enemy strongpoint and the time of reckoning had come. We did not even notice when a car pulled in and General Berzarin, our commander stepped out of it. He greeted us and ordered our commander "At the Fascist in Berlin, Open fire!" I do not think that we ever acted so swiftly to carry out a fire order. The adjutant came over and asked my name, and recorded the number of the gun. It was howitzer 2586. After the war it as sent to Moscow to the Museum of the Soviet Armed Forces. On the shells of the battery, our sanitary instructor wrote 'For Stalingrad! For Donbas! For the Ukraine! For Orphans and Widows! For the tears of Mothers!'

1st Ukrainian Front

After East Prussia, 28th Army passed to 1st Belorussian Front from 3rd Belorussian Front. Move by truck and rail to concnetrate by 16 April Poznan. By end of 16 April two rifle corps and all the army units had cocrntrated. Only 3rd Guards Corps held back. On 17 April Luchinsky went to 1st Ukrainian Front headquarters which were in area of Zorau. The front chief of staff, Colonel General Petrov, briefed me Monring 20 April, I was summoned by Marshal Konev. His command post was south east of town of Forst. Konev was a very dissatisfied by the slow advance of 1st Guards Cavalry Corps which he had sent into the breach the day before. He walked up to the map and pointed to the centre of Berlin: 'The 3rd Guards Tank Army is moving up in this direction. Your army has to catch up with it and break into Berlin with it.'

'I must know. Am I subordinate to Rybalko or is he subordinate to me?'

'Both of you answer to me', the Marshal replied. 'You must work together in the interests of your common cause, the capture of Berlin.'

On the evening of 20th April, Colonel General Petrov came to 28th Army headquarters. He told us that the 3rd and 4th Guards Tank Armies had reached the line of Baruth-Luckenwalde-Treuenbrietzen. Petrov No information on enemy forces between there and Berlin, or on who was to create the inner front on encircling the enemy north of Lubben and what was the situation of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front. Luchinsky, A.; Na Berlin!, VIZh, No.5, May 1965 commander 28th Army

1st Belorussian Front

8th Guards Army and 1st Guards Tank Army on 22 April advance developed successfully. Advanced 32 kilometres in two days. To continue they had to cross the Spree near Köpenick. The 20th Independent Pontoon Bridge battalion started organising the crossing under fire. They did not have the necessary ground to unload the pontoons. The vehicles, one by one, drove into the backyards of the houses on the river bank, and were unloaded. By the evening of 23 April, three ferries were organised able to lift fifty tons. The Spree was 150 metres wide and more. It took from 13 to 15 minutes for each ferry to cross the river. The main force of the 8th Guards Motorized Corps, were transported across in 24 hours. The next water obstacle was the Teltow canal. Crossing with a ferry on a cable near Britz. Makarevsky, V.: '17-ya motorin zhenernaia brigada v Berlinskoi operatsii', VIZh, April 1976, No.4

Reichhelm papers.

23 April Das schlagartige Aufhören [the sudden end] der amerikanischen Luftkampftätigkeit über dem gesamten Kampfraum der 12. Armee ließ jeden Einzelnen aufatmen. Es ist heute schwer, den starken seelischen Druck nachzuempfinden, der damals auf jedem Menschen durch die tägliche und nächtliche pausenlos Bedrohung aus der Luft gab. Reichhelm papers Das letzte Aufgebot, p.165

Goering in Bavaria.

On 23 April, Goering asked Bernhard Frank, the SS commander of the Obersalzberg to come to his office. Goering showed him the text of the signal which he had just sent to Hitler. According to Frank the text ran as follows: 'General Koller told me today, on the basis of information received from General Jodl and General Christian, that you mentioned me and said that if negotiations had to take place, I would be in a better position than you in Berlin. These statements were so surprising and grave that I felt obliged to assume that you have been deprived of freedom of action. If no answer is received by 2200 hours, I will then, according to the presupposition of your decree, accept the responsibility and act for the benefit of the people and the Fatherland. You will know what I feel for you during these most indescribably difficult hours of my life. God protect you and lead you here despite everything as soon as possible.' [typical egotism]

Goering told Frank that Hitler's orders should not be regarded as paramount. What mattered most was the survival of the German people. Frank agreed.

The next thing that happened A radio signal arrived from Borman in Berlin ordering Frank to arrest Goering as a traitor. Frank took the signal to Goering and showed it to him. Goering read the text and said: 'Well, you will have to arrest me then.'

'Jawohl, Herr Reichsmarschall!' Frank replied.

Goering and his aides were placed under house arrest and the kitchen was locked in case Goering tried to poison himself. A further signal arrived from Bormann ordering that Goering should be executed. Frank took the decision to ignore this order. He contacted Major General Rade and arranged for Goering's transfer to Mauldendorf Castle. But when Frank visited Goering in Mauldendorf on 29 April, he found that Goering had reverted to his lordly ways. He kept Frank waiting for half an hour and finally received him

wearing one of his extravagant hunting costumes.

Frank claims to have arranged for Berchtesgaden to be surrendered to Americans to avoid destruction and casualties.

Speer to Hamburg to set up the northern branch of his ministry, Then, on 23 April he decided to return to Berlin. He drove from Hamburg to Nauen, where he discovered that the Red Army had already cut the road. He went back to a Luftwaffe airfield used for test flights and commandeered a Focke-Wulf 190 converted to a trainer. He flew to Wannsee and there changed to a Fieseler Storch reconnaissance plane. He landed on the East-West Axis near the Brandenburg at dusk. Shells were falling sporadically on the city centre, as he made his way through the rubble to the Reich Chancellery.

In the bunker he found Krebs and Burgdorf as well as Bormann and Goebbels. Hitler was calm. He was deeply touched that Speer, unlike the other ministers, had dared to return to Berlin. Those present were discussing whether the Führer should stay or leave for the south. Bormann urged departure, Goebbels urged him to stay to the end. Speer also advised Hitler to stay, evidently feeling that martyrdom was the most suitable exit.

Speer talked to him more, arguing that if he were to be captured at the Berghof, the legends would be hard to create. But he did not have to push hard. He realised that Hitler's calm came from an acceptance of his fate. NA 740.0011 EW/5-145

General Reymann removed from his post. Telephone call from General Burgdorf. Ordered to take over defence of Potsdam instead. 22 April Oberst Kaether Chief of Staff of NSFO. Little he could do. All troops engaged. No direction or movement of troops since no reserves. Next day Soviet tanks reached the Teltow canal on the south-east edge of the city. The city was still without a commander on 24 April, when Hitler found his man in a 'tragi-comedy' typical of the regime. [BA-MA MSg 1/ 976 p.22]

On the morning of 24 April, General Weidling, the commander of the LVI Panzer Corps, the only major formation from Busse's Ninth Army to withdraw towards Berlin, rang General Krebs in the Reich Chancellery. He wanted to report on the situation from his command post in Rudow on the south-east edge of the capital. It was no more than 1,500 metres behind the front line.

Krebs greeted him 'mit auffallender Kühle', 'with conspicuous coldness', and asked him where he was. Weidling told him. Krebs then quoted the latest report from the Reich Chancellery which announced that General Weidling had been condemned to death. The Reich Chancellery had heard that while the gallant LVI Panzer Corps was fighting on the eastern edge of the Reich's capital, Weidling and his staff had sought safety at Döberitz to the west. Hitler, when he heard this, had instantly flown into a rage. He had ordered Weidling's execution without checking whether this rumour was true.

To sort out this misunderstanding, Weidling immediately set out for the Reich Chancellery. The last time he had seen Hitler was on receiving the swords to his knight's cross and oak leaves. Hitler, he now found, was a broken-down and pathetic wreck. Weidling reported the true positions of his corps and headquarters.

'Ich übergebe Ihnen hiermit die Verteidigung Berlins' said Hitler to the man whose execution for cowardice he had ordered less than twenty-four hours before. He told Weidling that his task was to halt the

Russian advance. 'In kürzester Zeit, wird sich das Blatt wenden!' Hitler declared. Army Group Steiner would be attacking from the north, Wenck's army would push up from the south, and from the west a powerful tank force was advancing. 'Ich bin gewillt, mit diesen starken Kräften dem Russen vor den Toren Berlins die große Vernichtungsschlacht zu liefern!'

Weidling made no comment. It would have been pointless. Steiner's so-called 'Army Group', which did not even amount to the equivalent of a single corps, was already withdrawing towards the west. Wenck's Twelfth Army now faced powerful opposition in the form of at least one, if not two tank armies, and nobody knew what had happened to the relief column from the west, 'supposedly a strengthened 7th Panzer Division'. 'mit auffallender Kühle', Refior 'Berliner Tagebuch', BA-MA MSg 1/ 976 p.23

Colonel Refior, who had been Reymann's chief of staff, was extremely pleased to find Weidling as his new commander, and he briefed him on the latest situation with the Lagekarte - the situation map. This showed the Red Army advance into Pankow and Tegel, and the Schlesischen Bahnhof and Friedrichshain. Weidling had no illusions that in the face of Soviet strength, resistance could not be maintained for long. Most of his own formations had been severely damaged in the Oder front battle. The 9th Parachute Division, now under a new commander, had not recovered from its mauling. The Müncheberg Panzer Division was reduced to remnants, and although the 20th Panzergrenadier Division was in better shape, its commander, Major General Scholz had committed suicide shortly after entering Berlin. Only the SS 'Nordland' Division under SS-Brigadeführer Ziegler and the 18th Panzergrenadier Division remained in a relatively battleworthy condition. Weidling decided to hold back the 18th Panzergrenadier Division in reserve for counter-attack. The others were distributed around the different defence sectors to act as 'Korsettstangen' 'corset-stiffeners'. Refior and Colonel von Dufving, the LVI Panzer Corps chief of staff, immediately went to work allocating units.

SS Nordland Division change of command. Refior believed that 'Ziegler hatte Sonderbefehle von Himmler und wollte nach Schleswig-Holstein abziehen', and that this was why he was arrested. BA-MA MSg 1/ 976 p.24

One of the NKVD rifle regiments attached to the 3rd Shock Army reported that some locals were setting fire to their own houses and disappearing into the forest. This was treated as sabotage. 'One of the arsonists was caught and executed on the spot'. But considering the indiscriminate shelling and bombing of all buildings - most of the villages in the area were mostly destroyed - cases of deliberate arson must have been rare indeed. 'One of the arsonists. . .', 157 Frontier Guards Regiment, RGVA 32925/1/125 p.176

Corporal Vladimir Ilyich Kurilov of the 230th Rifle Division proved himself a true Komsomol hero. When German resistance in Berlin was particularly strong at one point, he announced: 'I'm going forward for Stalin and the Motherland'. He stood up and ran round the defending building. No less than 26 rifles were pointing at him, but as he approached, he shouted out: 'Surrender or I'll liquidate you with grenades.' Saying this, he destroyed 17 German soldiers with grenades and captured 26 armed soldiers and officers who were sitting there, waiting to ambush our tanks. 'The brave and fearless warrior spoiled their plot', the political officer's report continued. Kurilov advanced further up the street, 'acting as a sniper and liquidated eleven German soldiers'. Although wounded, he still carried on. TsAMO 33/793756/26 p.133

Chapter 19 The Bombarded City

The heavy casualties during the Oder battle meant that the fresh drafts of reinforcements which arrived were badly needed. The political department of the 69th Army, however, was outraged at some of the conscripts they had been sent. 'Four people from a religious sect refused to take up arms. Some of them even started making propaganda. Three were arrested.' 'Four people from a religious sect TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.359-60

Action of enemy and its agents: The enemy sent into the rear of the Red Army agents from those taken previously by force from the occupied territories. The agents have a legend (cover story) that they were taken by force and that now they are going back to their Motherland. Using this cover story, they are trying to penetrate the rear of the Red Army. Also all Poles suspect. 23 April RGVA 32925/1/130 p.276

On 23 April, lead elements of the 1st Ukrainian Front met up with the 1st Belorussian Front in the area of Tremmen and Ketzin north west of Potsdam. This signified 'the total encirclement of the German Lair'. TsAMO 233/2374/194 p.76

General Field Marshal Keitel: 'On 23 April 1945, I left Berlin for the front. I went to the headquarters of the Twelfth Army. My task was to unite the Twelfth and Ninth Armies. When I was out of Berlin, I stayed in contact with Hitler, and through General Krebs, I received many orders and requests from Hitler who demanded to speed up of the movement of the Twelfth and Ninth Armies, and he ordered that a counter-attack should be launched immediately.' TsAMO 233/2356/5804 p.201-3

Antonov, V.S.: 'Poslednie dui voiny', VIZh, July 1987 No.7

Our division 301 Rifle Division on afternoon of 22 April, started fighting for Karlshorst. Attacks ceased as darkness fell. The commander of the 5th Shock Army, General Berzarin, said: 'Although Berlin is hidden by a haze one can already see it', he said pointing towards Berlin in smoke. Antonov reports plan of action. 'You should destroy the enemy in Karlshorst and then cross the Spree. Start at 13.00hrs.' At 12.50 opened fire. Low level attack aircraft started attacking the objectives, individually or in groups. Several Messerschmitts appeared, but they were met by our fighters and an air battle started. On the ground too it was 'hot'. One could see through binoculars from the divisional command post, how tanks with sub-machine gunners on them, breaking in to Karlshorst. [Future headquarters of Soviet occupation forces in Germany]. Within an hour, our command post was already set up in Karlshorst railway station, and I reported to Berzarin on the telephone. 'I see. Now I expect your next report from Treptow park.' Antonov went to the attic of the railway station from where he could observe the ground between Karlshorst and the Spree. Battle going well, Enemy unable to organise an effective resistance.

I ordered the commander of 220 Tank Brigade, Colonel Narutski, to take all the tanks to the east bank of the Spree and ordered the commander of the artillery division, Colonel Kazantsev, to send gun batteries of the 823 artillery regiment to the same place. The general tasks for the tankists and artillerymen were to destroy by direct fire, enemy fire points on the west bank of the Spree. The tanks arrived and opened fire on the enemy. After some time, they were joined by the field guns. Infantrymen started pulling boats towards the water. Soon the first men from the landing force were on the west bank, and they started moving quickly into the Plantewald Park. [Botanical garden in Treptow].

At dusk, a brigade of river boats from the Dnepr flotilla arrived on vehicles. The motorboats were quickly unloaded from the transporters, and they began ferrying rifle battalions across the Spree. [Only possible due to shortage of German ammunition.] Then a pontoon bridge regiment arrived too. The enemy organised resistance in the depth of the park, and was destroyed in a short, but severe, battle. The division formed a line on the west edge of the Plantewald park. TsAMO 9sk/24573/2 pp.245-255: fond 230sd/1/5 p.111

Chapter 20 False Hopes

At four in the morning on Tuesday 24 April, SS Brigadeführer Dr Gustav Krukenberg (members of the SS were always punctilious about their academic distinctions) received a call from Army Group Vistula headquarters. He was to move to Berlin immediately to take command of the SS 'Nordland' Division. Krukenberg had been chief of staff of V SS Mountain Corps. As a former army officer, he was one of the relatively few Waffen SS officers with staff training. Reformed near Neustrelitz, due north of Berlin. Once in Berlin he was to report to General Fegelein, the SS liaison officer in the Reich Chancellery. Krukenberg was surprised. He had no idea how such a city was to be defended without the most appalling battle. Paris in 1940 had been declared an open city. But he assumed that the Red Army's atrocities in East Prussia meant that there was no choice. Krukenberg was told to take an escort, and he chose ninety French volunteers, led by Henri Fenet, a battalion commander. Many were officers, including the divisional chaplain, Monsignor the Count Mayol de Lupé.

BA-MA MSg2/ 1283

At about four in the morning, Krukenberg was shown into the presence of General Krebs and General Burgdorf, Hitler's chief adjutant. Krukenberg had known Krebs in 1943 when Krebs had been Field Marshal von Kluge chief of staff at Army Group Centre, but he had never met Burgdorf before. Krebs appeared to be amazed at his arrival in Berlin. 'Wir haben in den letzten 48 Stunden von OKW aus an eine ganze Reihe von Offizieren, aber auch an Truppeneinheiten außerhalb Berlins den Befehl gegeben, zur Verstärkung der Verteidigung unverzüglich hierher zu kommen. Sie sind der Einzige, der eingetroffen ist!' Krebs then briefed him on the situation in Berlin and asked Krukenberg about what he had seen on the way in. Krukenberg was told to report to General Weidling on the Hohenzollerndamm, in what had been the peacetime headquarters of the III Army Corps. It was a building which he knew well. [BA-MA MSg2/ 1283 p.11]

23 April 1945. To the Führer from General Field Marshal Schörner: 'Mein Führer. As a continuation of the conversation which we had last night, I will permit myself as your Field Marshal on behalf of all the valorous soldiers fighting for your cause and on behalf of the people who have lost their lives for your sake, to ask you my Führer in this critical moment to leave Berlin immediately and to take command of the Reich and the Wehrmacht in the southern theatre of military operations. You and you alone, mein

Führer, are the guarantee of the Reich's continued existence, only to you is every German unquestionably obedient. Only you mein Führer, are the embodiment of Germany for every enemy state. With you, Germany will fall too. Millions of Germans want to build up the Reich again together with you, mein Führer. Nothing is lost yet. Everything can still be saved if only you were with us. This is our conviction, the conviction of soldiers and National Socialists. I repeat my appeal once again. On behalf of all those brave men who very well understand your unwillingness to leave Berlin. Long live mein Führer! GARF 9401/2/102 pp.13-17 27 November from Beria to Stalin

24 April 1945 from Hitler to Schörner. 'I am staying in Berlin to take part in the decisive battle with honour, the battle that Germany is now fighting, and to give a good example to all the others. I think that this is how I will render the best service to Germany. Every means should be tried to win the battle for Berlin. You can render decisive assistance if you break through to the north as soon as possible. With the expression of my sincere friendship. Yours Adolf Hitler.

Luchinsky

The headquarters of 3rd Guards Tank Army were in Großbeeren. 22 April. I warmly greeted Colonel General P.S. Rybalko and trying to be tactful asked: 'Why do the tankists cling to the western outskirts of the town instead of attacking on the shortest possible route through Mariendorf? And why have they halted?'

Pavel Simeonovich answered: 'The tanks cannot cross the Teltow canal with its granite embankment.' He was planning to use an outflanking movement which would prevent the Berlin garrison from retreating to the west. He asked for a rifle Division to capture a bridgehead on the north bank of the Teltow canal and to have an engineering sapper brigade for repairing bridges.

On the same day, 22 April, an order was received from Konev not to let the Cottbus group of the enemy break through to Berlin. To destroy it acting together with thetp from 1st Belorussian Front and at the same time to advance to Berlin with the main forces in cooperation with the 3rd Guards Tank Army. This order asked the 28th Army to fulfill simultaneously two totally different tasks in different directions. The front line of the Berlin defence along north bank of Teltow canal, which was fifty metres wide and three metres deep. It was a serious obstacle.

Beria to Stalin dated 25 April attached is Serov's report of 23 April on districts of Berlin occupied by our troops.

In the areas adjacent to the centre on the east and north sides, not more than 30% of buildings are destroyed, while the central part which can be observed from one the houses near the Spree, is 50-60% destroyed. This confirmed by local residents. At the present time, the centre of the city is still burning. On the walls of many buildings one frequently sees the word 'Pst' [i.e. silence] written in big letters. Berliners say that this word was written everywhere after the unsuccessful actions of the German troops and were written with the intention of reducing criticism of the German government. Most of the population are in the cellars of houses and in metro stations.

During the conversation with Berliners in one of the underground stations, they asked whether the administrative organs going to be organised [hatred of an interregnum] when food would be provided etc. It should be mentioned that in four districts already occupied by troops of the Front, no depots with foodstuffs have been found. Officials from magistratures from the districts said that food supplies were given once a week in the form of one thousand four hundred grams of bread per person. The bread came from the city's bakeries, potatoes, 2400 grams, and meat 350 gms per week, was brought from villages on a very irregular basis. At the present time, because of the fighting, the distribution of bread and supplies of foodstuffs from villages have come to a complete halt. According to the chief of police of Lichteberg district of Berlin, Oberleutnant Otto Behr, who was arrested today, there are 150 to 200,000 residents in each district.

During the last few days, due to the retreat of the German troops from the Oder, many refugees have arrived in Berlin, and among them are many children. In connection with organising administrative organs in Berlin, we asked the Germans their opinion concerning the appointment of burgermeisters and other officials from among local residents. Out of ten Germans asked if they could act as local burgermeister, not a single one agreed, producing different insignificant reasons. They seem to be afraid of the consequences and fear to take on the job. It is therefore necessary to select burgermeisters from among the prisoners of war who come from Berlin held in our camps.

Interrogation of captured Volkssturm members revealed an interesting fact. When they were asked why there are no regular soldiers and officers among them, they said that they were afraid of their responsibility for what they had done in Russia and therefore they will surrender to the Americans, while the Volkssturm can surrender to the bolsheviks because they are guilty of nothing. Also the prisoners said that garrison of Berlin could surrender within the next two days, but they had no commander who could make a decision about capitulation and they cannot disobey the order to maintain their defence. The commander has gone to the west.

Yesterday it was announced on Berlin radio that Hitler has taken command of the defence of Berlin and dismissed all chiefs of defence sectors of the city. The Frontier Guards Regiments 333, 157, and 105 of NKVD troops for guarding the rear areas, started to carry out blocking [barrier service] duties in the districts of Berlin, according to the plan which we have compiled.

The following facts were established in an eastern suburb of Berlin: the villages and towns on the way to Berlin that had been captured during the last few days were not destroyed and the German population that ran away during the last few days is now returning home. The 20 kms of a railway line which goes to Berlin from the east is destroyed in many places. Sleepers have been torn up by a special machine. No serious permanent defences have been found inside the ten to fifteen kilometre zone around Berlin. There are fire-trenches and gun-pits and the motorways are mined in certain sections. There are some trenches just as one comes to the city, but less in fact than any other city taken by the Red Army. Captured Volkssturm soldiers who lived in Berlin said when questioned that the front line of defence which was eight kilometres from Berlin was held by Volkssturm, mobilised in February of this year, aged forty-five or over. They did not have any military training. There was one rifle and seventy-five rounds for every two or three men. The Volkssturm are commanded by regular officers. One officer for each platoon. Berlin itself, streets, crossroads etc is defended by regular troops and SS who have mortars and cannons. One of the prisoners of war who took leave to see his family two days ago said that the regular troops are quite few in the city. In each little street of the city, light barricades have been built, mainly with rubble from bombed out buildings as well as stakes made of logs, sleepers and rails. When the prisoners were asked how long the Germans planned to defend the city: they said that the siege cannot last more than two or three days because there is not enough ammunition, and besides Volkssturm cannot handle weapons and don't want to fight, which causes arguments between them and regular troops. This is true because we have seen the following: eight Russian and Ukrainian women, who came to us from Listenberg [?] which was defended by Volkssturm, told us that they were sitting in the trenches with Germans and saw a Volkssturm man

raise a white flag above the trench and a German Lieutenant, a company commander in charge of the sector, had torn the flag down and killed the Volkssturm man. A very short time afterwards, our soldiers took this trench and found the white flag and the dead Volkssturm man beside it. The following fact proves the Germans' shortage of ammunition. While we there, the Germans were watching for one and a half hours, the concentration of our tanks and infantry of the 2nd Tank Army on their start positions before they attacked, but did not start artillery or mortar fire. There were just a few shots from snipers and short series of shots from machine guns, while on the Oder, the Germans tried to bury us in shells at such moments.

It became clear from interrogating prisoners and civilians that there is still a great fear of Bolsheviks. Until the last moment German propaganda tried to convince Germans that the Bolsheviks kill everyone and in the best case, take them to Siberia. This is proved well enough by the fact that when Russian women started running towards us from the German trenches, the Germans were shouting to them 'Don't run towards the Russians. They'll kill you.' Nevertheless, the Germans did not fire at them. Captured German soldiers who lived in Berlin and civilian Berliners and the Russians who lived there say that there are no less two and a half to three million residents who stayed there. The population and military people are seized with panic. The majority of rich Germans and senior officials left Berlin three or four days ago, moving west. The people who stayed are mostly workers and low-ranking employees, among whom there are many Italians, Ukrainians and Russians who worked in factories. The Berlin water supply system does not work because of damage caused by bombing and bombardment. Electric power is provided to companies for not more than two or three hours a day. The population is given 350 gms. Per person per day and soldiers 500gms. Both soldiers and population look starved and exhausted. At the present time, Berlin is burning from the bombardment from our aviation, particularly the northern part. Anti-aircraft defence is not functioning. During one and a half hours, we saw only two or three shells fired at our planes. Soldiers say that the anti-aircraft guns were taken to fire at ground targets on another defence line and this is why few of them were left in the city. GARF 9401/2/95 pp.304-310

Beria to Stalin

In connection with the STAVKA's order 20 April No.11072 on changing the attitude of Red Army troops towards German prisoners and civilian population, a question arises concerning organisation of civilian affairs departments on the German territory occupied by our troops. These departments are to be organised within the offices of commanders of Fronts. As the Stavka has ordered the establishment of local German administrations, the military administrations of civilian affairs will have to exercise control over the operation of local German institutions and the implementation by them of the Soviet military command.

In this connection, I think it necessary in order to create a normal atmosphere in the rears of the operational Red Army on German territory. 1. To establish at the offices of the 1st Belorussian Front 1st Ukrainian Front and 2nd Belorussian Front, the position of deputy front commander on regulating civilian affairs and organise a corresponding administration on civilian affairs. 2. To mobilise the necessary number of Red Army officers and Soviet administrative, economic officials for working in the apparatus of military and civilian affairs.

3. To impose on the military administration of civilian affairs the responsibility for rendering assistance to the reps of the NKVD of the USSR at the Fronts in organising camps and prisons for keeping Germans (spies, saboteurs, terrorists, those who worked in punitive organizations, members of fascist organizations and others) who have been arrested by representatives of the NKVD of the USSR in the cause of clearing the rear areas of the Red Army in accordance with the order of the NKVD of the USSR of 18 April which you have approved.

For your information: on the territory of western Germany, the allies have established a position of special deputy of commander of Allied troops, Eisenhower, who is in charge of civilian affairs, Major General Lucius Clay, who until he was appointed to this position, was deputy chief of the bureau of mobilising military resources of the USA.

The Allies regulate the occupied German territory through the organ of military administration, which is headed by Clay and consists of 3,000 men who had been trained in special schools. They are officers and people with economic and administrative experience.

The Allies are widely using for controlling civilian affairs, the local German administration, police courts, municipal administrations, financial institutions etc. that act under the guidance and control of the officials of the military administration listed above.

Also in Eisenhower's staff, there is a political adviser on German affairs, an official from the State Department of the USA, Murphy. I request a decision. Beria GARF 9401/2/95 pp.317-328

To secure the successful implementation of Soviet military command measures on the regulation of German territory occupied by Red Army troops, the State Committee of Defence orders:

1. To establish with the offices of commanders of 1st Belorussian Front, 2nd Belorussian Front and 1st Ukrainian Fronts, the position of a deputy front commander in charge of civilian affairs.
2. To appoint the following deputy front commanders for the administration of civilian affairs: 1st Belorussian Front, State Security Commissar of the 2nd rank, Comrade Serov I.A.; 2nd Belorussian Front, State Security Commissar of the 3rd rank, Comrade Tsanova L.F.; 1st Ukrainian Front, Lieutenant General Comrade Meshik, P.Ya.
3. To establish that the deputy front commander is to:
 - a. exercise control over the local German administration including the sphere of securing public order and the fulfillment of all orders and tasks given by the Soviet military command given to these orders. The deputy commanders of fronts are to perform these functions through the commanders of units and Red Army military commandants as well as through their specially appointed representatives.
 - b. carries out the necessary work on discovering and removing on the German territory occupied by the Red Army of spies, saboteurs, terrorists... And other active enemy elements. For carrying out this work, a group of operatives of NKVD-NKGB of the USSR will be given to each deputy commander of the front and they can also use the operational troops

of SMERSH organs.

For keeping the removed enemy element under guard, deputy commanders of the front for civilian administration can organise the necessary number of prisons and camps whose locations should be agreed with NKVD of the USSR.

To set forth that the deputy front commander is at the same time a representative of the NKVD of the USSR and is responsible to the NKVD of the USSR for the work on removing enemy elements. [ie no responsibility to the military]

Oberheeresarchivrat Dr. Friedrich Granier wriiten 23.9.45

Go to Siegesäule. Morning 24 April. At first saw 'wir sahen nur ganz wenige Feindflugzeuge'. Saw FW190s used as ground attack aircraft ?? Schlachtflugzeuge. Flakbunker firing over their heads., Fock Wulfs disappeared and Soviet bombers came over. On first attack their gun destroyed by a direct hit. Granier wounded soon afterwards in both legs. Taken to Flakturm. But 'Da ber das dortige Lazarett bereits überfullt war, fuhr mich ein SS-Auto zum Hauptverbandplatz im Reichstag. Hier kümmerte man sich jedoch überhaupt nicht um mich. Ich mußte die Nacht auf dem, glücklicherweise mit einem Teppich belegten, Fußboden schlafen. Am nächsten Morgen verließ ich den Verbandplatz und humpelte zu einem ganz in der Nähe befindlichen Lazarett. Hier wurde das rechte Bein geschient, und man man verabreichte mir eine Tetanus-Spritze. Auch zu essen bekam ich etwas. Ich habe über 24 Stunden außer etwas Schokolade nichts mehr genossen. Da ich aber sah, daß der Platz sehr knapp wurde, weil ja immer neue Verwundete hinzukamen, und ich mich auch getrennt von meinen Kamaraden nicht wohlfülte, verließ ich mit Erlaubnis des Chefarztes um 2 Uhr nachts das Lazarett, um zur Siegessäule zurückzukehren. Zu anderer Zeit war es gegen des starken Beschuss unmöglich. Glücklicherweise stieß ich oben auf ein Auto, das mich bis zur Hofjägerallee mitnahm. Die nächsten Tage verbrachte ich meist liegend in unserer Unterkunft. Diese hatten wir in einer der Unterführungen eingerichtet, die Du wohl kennen wirst. Da sie bis dahin als Luftschutzraum gedient hatten, waren dort Bänke vorhanden; diese hatten wir zusammengestellt und benutzen sie als Lagerstätte, immer drei auf zwei Bänker.

Unser Dasein an der Siegessäule währte bis zum 1.5. abends. Gegen 22 Uhr kam der Batteriechef von einer Besprechung zurück mit dem Befehl, wir sollten Richtung Westen ausbrechen. Diese Nachricht wurde von uns freudig aufgenommen, weil wir glaubten, daß wir dort auf die sagenhafte Entsatzarmee Wenck stoßen würden. Ob diese Armee jemals existiert hat, ist umstritten (NB: sie hat! Wenn auch die Bezeichnung Armee reichlich übertrieben ist). Gesehen haben wir jedenfalls nichts von ihr. Die Batterie gelangte im geschlossenen Haufen bis zum Zoobunker. Hier bekamen wir plötzlich MG-Feuerworauf sich alles erstreute. Ich wandte mich mit verschiedenen anderen Soldaten, die ich jedoch nicht kannte, zum Knie und stieg dort in den U-Bahn-Schacht. Unten ging es weiter bis zum Bahnhof Neu-Westend. Von hier verlief der weitere Weg über Spandau - Staaken - Döberitz - Priort - Kartzow - Satzkorn - Falkenrede bis Etzin. Wirkliche Kämpfe hatten wir nur am Anfang in Spandau und Staaken sowie zum Schluß in Etzin zu bestehen. Slowed down by wounds but just managed to keep up 'die Kolonne der ich mich angeschlossen hatte (es war kein geschlossener Verband, sondern ein aus Soldaten allen Waffengattungen bestehender Haufen). At Etzin, Told to make a breaktghrough attempt at 22.00 hours. [3 or 4 May?] Knew almost surrounded so those with weapons made a circular defence. 'Viele hatten sie nämlich schon längst weggeworfen; so war es mir schon in Spandau möglich, mein französisches Gewehr, das ich bei der Flak empfangen hatte, gegen einen deutschen Karabiner einzutauschen. Russian infantry attack. Fire back. 'Es war wohl die unangenehmste Nacht meines Lebens. Anfangs regnete es, so daß wir ziemlich durchnäßt wurden. Dann mußten wir durch einen Graben hindurch, dessen Wasserspiegel mir is?weit übers Knie ging. Ich war so müde, daß ich beim Weitermarsch oftmals im Gehen einschlief, stehen blieb, nach einer Minute wieder aufwachte und nun die anderen wieder einholen mußte - hatte ich doch seit vier Tagen nicht geschlafen! Schließlich legten wir uns, durchnäßt wie wir waren, im Wald auf den feuchten Boden nieder, um einige Stunden zu schlafen.

Am nächsten Morgen, es war der 5.Mai, warne wir gerade aufgewacht und hatten unser Frühstück ausgepackt, als ein Trupp Russen erschien, der den Wald durch kämte. Sie schossen ihre Gewehre in

die Luft Antony Beevor und kamen auf uns zu, um uns zunächst Uhren und Pistolen abzunehmen. Bei mir fanden sie beides nicht, dafür aber etwas anderes, was sie nicht minder erfreute. Ein Russe nämlich deutete auf meine Feldflasche und fragte: 'Schnapps?' Ich hatte nun tatsächlich mir an der Siegessäule die Feldflasche mit Schnapps gefüllt, und da noch ein kleiner Rest darin war, bejahte ich. Daraufhin goß der Russe den Inhalt in der Trinkbecher, but zuerst mir an und trank selbst den Rest aus.' Rounded up taken to Döberitz. Given 'Krössin-Brot' eine Art Knäkebrot. Food 'ein paar rohe Kartoffeln' for supper. But food soon improved. A lot more than the Germans had ever given their Red Army prisoners. 15 may order to march to Kustrin. Took two days.

BA-MA Msg1/3046

Serov to Beria 25 April (26 April to Stalin)

Reporting about the operative measures that we have carried out on 1st Belorussian Front. On 25 April on the sector of 1st Polish Infantry Division, the ex-president [in fact prime minister] of the Spanish Republic was liberated from Oranienburg concentration camp. Caballero said that he came to Paris from Spain in 1939. In 1940, when the Germans took the city, he escaped to the south of France. Then the Germans found him and organised his guarding by the police. In November 1940, the gestapo put him in jail wher he stayed until 1941 and then was released under police supervision. In February 1943, Caballero was arrested again and was held in a Berlin prison until June 1943, after that he was taken to a concentration camp. Caballero was in an extremely emaciated state and he was put in the divisional field hospital. Caballero said that he would like to inform his family that he was alive. I request your instructions on Caballero. GARF 9401/2/95 pp.323

25 April. Hitler to Doenitz: 'The battle for Berlin is of decisive importance for the fate of Germany. Compared to it, all other goals are of secondary importance, therefore I request that you cease all operations and support the units fighting for Berlin. For this purpose, the troops should be transported into the city by air to the units that are fighting near Berlin.' TsAMO 233/2356/5804 p.155-6

'Allgemeine Überraschung herrscht über den russischen Vormarsch zur Elbe. Die gestrigen Nachrichten waren die katastrophalsten seit langem.' Kompaniecehf tells them that when the Russians and the Americans meet up, 'würden die Russen weitermarschieren gegen Amerika'. Germany which had refused on racist grounds to ignite a civil war to bring down the Soviet Union, now hoped to be saved by a new sort of civil war between the allies. Soldiers discuss article on Third World War.

BZG-S 22 April. Uffz. Heinrich V. in Prague Gren. Ers.Btl. 260 diary

27 April US to Soviet Union on recognition signs. Both US and Russians found German tanks using Soviet recognition signs on their tanks. New system introduced from 1 May. German tanks sighted near Linz (where US Third Army and Russians close) bearing Soviet recognition signs. (Little danger of attack by Luftwaffe). Russians informed 3 May. 'Certain Britsih B vehicles carry roundels. Russians ask what B vehicles were and what roundels were. Fear of blue on blue. Not just in Germany but also in North Italty. Soviet troops to identify themselves with 'series of white rockets'. White triangles painted on top of turret and and on sides.

NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Soviet Union asks for Bomb line to be moved westwards.

Calau (51 45 N 13 47 E) Slavin said accidents were 'not bound to occur' since the Russians had not hit any Allied troops, it was only the other way round. All incidents 'had been the fault of the Allies.' Colonel Andersen retorted that he would like clarification of Allied recognition signals over Soviet positions, because both Soviet anti-aircraft artillery and fighter planes continue to fire at our aircraft even after the proper signals had been given'. General Slavin replied that this was the first that he had heard of the matter.

Russians had at that stage a white band round the turret and a cross on top as well as firing red flares. Americans five pointed star on turret. Delays in receipt of front-line news. 21 April. Slavin complained in retort to Allied complaints of lateness that changes in our front line positions come to him 'at least a day late, or even two days late'.

21 April Eisenhower to Moscow mil mission and to British Chiefs of Staff.

2. As a result of our rapid advance our logistical position is becoming more difficult - if we go indefinitely advancing in strength in the center, we will not have the logistical ability to put any strong effort in on our flanks against the remaining enemy forces. Moreover, we must make sure of cleaning out Austria, and Norway if the Germans hold out there, before the winter; and these operations may take considerable time.

3. Accordingly, it has been decided to halt the advance in the center for the time being, using the Elbe, the Mulde river and the Erz Gebirge foothills as our main positions, though we shall probe out east of these rivers. Meanwhile we shall clean up our flanks. In the north this will entail advancing over the Elbe and cleaning the enemy from Schleswig Holstein and Denmark. These operations, aside from destroying important enemy forces, will be designed to free the north German ports, eliminate the present submarine menace, and secure German shipping. In the south, a thrust will be delivered with one United States army on the approximate axis Bayreuth-Salzburg, and with another United States Army on the approximate axis Wurzburg-Munich-Western Austria, while the French Army mops up the Black Forest region, and possibly enters Austria too. US identification a series of more than two green Verey lights.

24 April evening Colonel General Jodl holds a Lagebesprechung. According to Field Marshal Keitel 'die Truppe wäre nicht nur kämpfwillig, sondern auch noch weitestgehend kämpffähig; die Rückschläge seien weit mehr auf die Mutlosigkeit und wohl auch den fehlenden Willen der höheren und mittleren Führung zurückzuführen'. 'Ein treuer Schüler seines Herrn!'

Keitel tried to give the impression to the officers present that he was a man, 'der völlig truppenfremd war'. But it only underlined the fact that he had not spent a single day of the war at the front. 'daß er während des ganzen Krieges nicht einzigen Tag an der Front gewesen war'. Keitel always in full Field Marshal's uniform with baton. Jodl, who loathed and despised Keitel, confided in Dethleffsen after the meeting: 'Ich habe sechs Jahre unter dem Mann leiden müssen'. BA-MA N65/ 126 p.160

In Lichtenberg 24 April last of the Volkssturm defenders pulled out at four in the morning. Many had discarded whatever military items they had to become civilians again. 'Wir wollen schon die roten Fahnen hissen,' recorded one 'anti-fascist', 'da erscheint plötzlich eine neue Truppe. Es sind 15 bis 17jährige Hitlerjungen, kommandiert von einem faschistischen Hitlerjungenführer. Bewaffnet sind sie mit panzerfäusten und Schnellfeuergewehren. Sie kommen direkt von der Front und sind völlig demoralisiert. Einzelne weinen. Unsere Frauen agitieren tüchtig unter ihnen. These were the last . 10 am sub-machine gunners appear. Lakowski, R. & Dorst K.: Berlin - Frühjahr 1945 pp.45-46

Tully and Virginia Irwin of St. Louis Post Dispatch filed the following story: 'Berlin, Germany, April 27. I am one of the first three Americans to enter Berlin. After a fantastic journey northward after we crossed the Elbe River, where the Russians and Americans made contact this afternoon, I arrived in Berlin at dark tonight with Andrew Tully, reporter for the Boston Traveller, and jeep driver Sergeant John Wilson of Roxbury, Massachusetts. [of 26th (Yankee) Division]

The air is heavy with smoke. Everywhere around us is the crackle of small arms fire. Russian artillery is pouring an almost constant barrage into the heart of the city. But in this Russian command post, where we are guests of guards - Major Nikolai Kovaleski, there is a terrific celebration going on. The arrival of three Americans in Berlin was the signal for the Russians to break out their best vodka and toss a terrific banquet in our honour. 'NARA RG334/Entry309/Box 6 War Correspondents

[Not easy to find their way to Berlin. 'All German road signs had been removed and replaced with their Russian equivalents. We got to Berlin on the strength of a crude, hand-made American flag flying from our jeep, several hundred handshakes and repeated assurances to fierce Russians who repeatedly stopped us that we were 'Amerikanski'. . . . 'as soon as we had convinced the Russians of our identity, we were mobbed.'

Censored passage: 'we hit highways clogged with the great body of the Russian Army heaving itself along in its motley array of horse-drawn vehicles of all sorts. There were Russian troops riding in American two and one half ton trucks. There were Russian troops riding in two-wheel carts, in phaetons, in old-fashioned pony carts, in gypsy wagons, in surreys with fringed tops. They rode in everything that could be pulled. The wagons were filled with hay and the soldiers lay on top of the hay like an army taking a holiday. . .

In Berlin 'German dead lay on the sidewalks and in the front yards of the bomb-shattered homes of the Berlin suburbs. All streets were clogged with Russian tanks, guns, infantry, men in their shaggy fur hats, and everywhere the horses of the Russian Army ran loose about the streets. But the Russians were happy - with an almost indescribably wild joy. They are in Berlin. In this German capital lies their true revenge for Leningrad and Stalingrad, for Sevastopol and Moscow. And the Russians are having their revenge.

Any German refugee carts that they find 'the Russians either drive over the German carts or push them off the road and upset them'. 'In the territory over which I travelled to Berlin, I saw very few Germans. They fear the Russians as no nation has ever feared a conquering army.' NARA RG334/Entry309/Box 6 War Correspondents

When Tully and Irwin returned, Eisenhower decided that because they had entered Berlin illegally, their stories could only be published if submitted to Moscow for censorship. Submitted 3 May. Passed with cuts 7 May. By then ten days after events.

TORGAU

Faizulin, A and Dolbrovolsky. P.: 'Vstyrecha na El'be', pp. 51-53, VIZh April 1979, No.4

Chief political department 5th Guards Army, Major General Katkov, to chief of political department of 1st Ukrainian Front. 29 April 1945.

'Having reached the east bank of the Elbe on 23 April, 2nd Rifle Battalion of the 173 Guards Rifle Regiment of 58th Guards Rifle Division, commanded by Guards Captain Neda, took up a defence line near the bridge over the Elbe opposite the town of Torgau situated on the west bank. In the afternoon, 25 April, from the church tower in Torgau, an American soldier was shouting something unintelligible. And another of the soldiers said 'Moskva-Amerika'. The soldier said that he was from a group of American recon men ordered to find out where the Soviet troops were. Soon an officer of the American army arrived, who said that the recon men were from the 69th ID of 1st American Army and asked one of our officers to go with him to the American headquarters. On the invitation of the commander of the 69th Division, representatives of our Regiment, deputy commander of 173 Guards Rifle Regiment, Guards Major Ilarionov, Guards Capt Neda, arrived 2320 at the headquarters of the 69th Division, which were forty kilometres west of the river. The meeting was extraordinarily friendly. The General and his officers were photographed together with our officers and they fixed another meeting, for which General Reinhardt, Brigadier-General Marest, and officers from divisional headquarters together with an escort to Torgau on thirteen Willys jeeps.

On 26 April at 11.00 a meeting took place of a regimental commander of the 69th Infantry Division and the commander of 173 Guards Rifle Regiment, Guards Major Rogov. The meeting was held on the initiative of the American commander. The meeting took place on the bridge over the Elbe. Besides the regtl commanders the meeting was attended by other officers from both sides. During the meeting, Comrade Rogov [horns] and the American regtl commander exchanged brief speeches of greeting. In their speeches they both stressed that it was necessary to strengthen the friendship between the two peoples and their armies and by their joint efforts to speed up the final destruction of fascist Germany. Then Comrade Rogov invited the Americans for breakfast.

In the second half of the day, commander of the 58th Guards Rifle Division, Major General Rusakov, met the commander of the 69th US Infantry Division. During this meeting, the two commanders exchanged speeches of welcome. In his speech, the American General stated: 'I am living through the most joyful days in my life. I am proud and happy that my division was the first to meet units of the heroic Red Army, two great Allied armies have met on the territory of fascist Germany. This meeting is going to speed up the final destruction of Germany's armed forces.' Replying to this Rusakov; 'This long-awaited and joyful day has come. Two great armies have met on German territory. The heroic Red Army has followed a long journey of tense fighting and glorious victories. We are happy to meet the allied American troops on the territory of Fascist Germany. Let this meeting be a guarantee of the quickest and the most

complete possible destruction of Hitler's army and the establishment of a lasting peace.'

Reinhardt presented Rusakov with an American Flag. The reception organised by General Rusakov was characterised by an exceptionally warm and friendly atmosphere. Major General Reinhardt and Brig Gen Marest and the officers from the American Army who accompanied them, congratulated the officers of the Division on the victories of the Red Army and expressed their admiration for the heroic feats of the Russian army.' TsAMO 236/2675/170 p.308-311

25 April Torgau leading units 58th Guards Rifle Division of 5th Guards Army, 1st Ukrainian Front. Met a patrol of Americans. 'a delighted and friendly atmosphere'. 26 April 45 from Konev to Stalin: 'Troops of the the front units of the 5th Guards Army crossed the Elbe, got hold of an important railway stations and such towns as Torgau, Riesa, Mühlberg and met recce units of 69th Infantry Division, 5th Army Corps, 1st American Army'. TsAMO 236/2673/2448 p82.

Order from the Commander-in-chief of the active army: 'Troops of 1st Ukrainian Front and our allies, British and American troops, have split the German front by blows from east and west. At 1330 on 25 April, they met in the centre of Germany in the area of Torgau. This means that the German troops in north Germany are now cut off from the south and other regions of Germany. To celebrate this victory and these historical events, today on 27 April, 1900, the capital of our Motherland is saluting on behalf of the Motherland to the valorous troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, the allied British American troops, a 24 gun salute from 324 guns. Long live the victory of freedom-loving peoples over Germany!' Marshal Stalin Order 346, 27 April,

Prikazy Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduyushchgo v period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza. p. 473., Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975

21 April Eisenhower to Moscow military mission and to British Chiefs of Staff.

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SS Gruppenführer Kurt Gerun, Polizeipresident of Berlin, interrogated on Werwolf said that Goebbels had convened a meeting in Berlin conveyed Hitler's order to start creating Werwolf organizations everywhere. Gerun had provided 500 blank passports for those attending Werwolf courses.

Recently shooting at our soldiers from the forest, but those captured all said that they were firing at the Red Army on their own initiative. The majority of those arrested were between 15 and 17 years old.

Sent 'our most reliable agents' to investigate the Werwolf underground. Active fascists are hiding in Berlin intend to unite the scattered units of Werwolf and create in June of this year on the territory of German occupied by the Red Army and the Allies an underground Werwolf centre which would be called Reichsleitung. The whole German territory would be divided into three sections. An ex-official from the ministry of military industry, Bierbach, is currently organising it. In each Werwolf detachment will be organised, a sabotage group, an incendiary group, a terroristic group, and a group of passive opposition.

Chapter 21 - Fighting in the City

3rd Shock Army

'Someone touched my sleeve. I turned round and saw an infantry soldier. He was wearing a brand new medal for courage. He said: 'I wish you good health, Comrade Junior Lieutenant. You haven't forgotten me, have you?' I rememberd him well, along with several of his comrades, whom I had met under quite unpleasant circumstances during one of the battles on the Oder bridgehead in the middle of April. In the heat of the battle, I suddenly noticed that a small group of infantrymen from the 674th Rifle Regiment, could not withstand the pressure from the enemy, left their positions, and started retreating back to our guns. To retreat without orders was a matter for a military tribunal. I cut them off. When they saw me, they stopped in hesitation. I could only say: 'Do you realise what you are doing?' The soldiers stood looking down. I could see colour coming back into their beaten faces. This moment seemed to be unbearably long. Finally, one of the soldiers raised his head. In his eyes I saw a desperate plea. Moving his dry lips with difficulty, he said: 'Give us a chance to make it up.' I pointed back to where the rest of their unit was advancing towards the enemy. The soldiers pulled themselves together. I was happy to see one of them near the Reichstag. 'How are things with your other comrades?' 'Everything is fine. They've all received medals. We've also come here to leave our signatures. What do you think, Comrade Junior Lieutenant? Do you think we have the right to do this?'

'Of course' Klochkov replied and shook his hand.

'A tank brigade would receive one main axis and one or two parallel streets. A mechanized would receive four or five streets. A motor rifle battalion, two or three. Groups of infantry were moving in front of the tanks. They raked the buildings in the street with fire to protect the tanks from fausters. When they came up against barricades and obstacles, the infantry supported by tank and artillery fire, would secure them, then the sappers would blast a way through for the tanks. This scheme was used for example on 26 April on the bridge over the Landwehr canal, near the Postdam railway station. The approaches to the bridge were blocked by barricades. Tankists from 44th Guards Tank Brigade managed to take it only after the sappers from the 1st Engineering Company of 13th Guards Independent Motorised Engineering Battalion blew up a 60 kg charge and made a hole in the barricade which was seven metres wide. Thanks to the quickness of the sappers' action, the tankists' success was secured, the enemy did not have time to blow up the bridge. The same sappers blew up a Panther tank which was dug into the earth. Sergeant A.M. Chupin, was made a Hero of the Soviet Union.' Makarevsky, V.: '17-ya motorin zhenernaia brigada v Berlinskoi operatsii', VIZh, April 1976, No.4

Charité hospital mostly evacuated to north by lorry before the Soviet troops broke through at Seelow. Professor Sauerbruch, head doctor, appealed to Weidling for help for the many left behind in the cellars. Weidling read this letter to Hitler on 28 April at evening meeting.

Berlin fighting

Wallin, a wounded Swede from the Nordland, sensed that his only hope of survival lay in getting out of the dressing station. He found a piece of wood to use as a crutch, and struggled up the steps, ignored by the over-occupied staff, to a street littered with burnt-out vehicles and corpses. He had no idea where to go and little strength, and fainted just off the Kurfürstenstrasse. He came round to find his head in the lap of a pretty young woman. He naturally thought that he was dreaming. She helped him over the rubble into a nearby house where she lived. In the apartment, her mother prepared a meal with wine. When they heard that he was Swedish, they asked why he did not try to get into the Swedish Embassy bunker, which was nearby.

He had not thought of it. The Embassy was nearby. She helped him there. Elegant Swedes outside smoking. He had three weeks growth of beard. Ingrained dirt in face. Uniform encrusted with dirt. He had a machine pistol, a Luger and two grenades. Some tried to prevent him entering, saying that this was neutral territory, but another man appeared, and after persuading him to abandon his weapons, led him down to a bed. Wallin burst into tears. Man took off his filthy bandages. But thought of those outside and this took away all the pleasure. But he thanked him, gathered together his arsenal, and with his improvised crutch, limped off. Limped off down Kaiserallee. Twice lost consciousness. Spotted by two SS men on a motorcycle. They pick him up, put him in the sidecar and rove him to a school where a Reservelazarett had been set up.

After 28 April, everything concentrated on Berlin. As we advanced into Berlin, there were 'frequent cases of mutual firing at our own troops' due to delayed information on situation of neighbouring units. To avoid such unpleasant events being repeated, I reported to commander 1st Ukrainian Front the districts already occupied by my formations and requested that these areas should not be bombarded. At midnight 28 April. My chief of staff showed me a copy of the reply from Zhukov to Konev demanding to withdraw the troops of 28th Army from Berlin. On morning of 29 April, the order was received to take the 61st Rifle Division out of the area of the Anhalter Bahnhof. For us a new boundary was established to the centre of Berlin: Mariendorf-Tempelhof-Viktor-Luiseplatz-Savigny station and so on along the railroad to Charlottenburg-Westkreuz-Ruhleben. Claims a break in the fighting of 24 hours in which units of 8th Guards Army took over from 28th Army. Luchinsky, A.; Na Berlin!, VIZh, No.5, May 1965 commander 28th Army

Rifle divisions were given areas of responsibility in strips 1.5 to 2 kilometres wide. Rifle regiments strips 500 to 700 metres wide. Rifle battalions advanced across 2 to 4 streets across 250 to 400 metres. In each rifle battalion two to four storm groups created, each advanced along one of the streets. Each battalion commander had ready in reserve a rifle platoon, a battery of 76mm guns, a platoon of 120mm mortars and a section of sappers. The reserve was used to support the action of the storm groups.

Cooperation between infantry and tanks was organised at regt-bn level. Example, 1st Battalion 646 Rifle Regiment of the 152 Rifle Division and the 2nd battalion of the 91st Tank Brigade in a battle south of the Zoological Garden. The cdrs of both battalions were in the same observation post and allocated the tanks and rifle companies. Any barricades captured by the infantry were used for shelter, and two tanks in each street started firing along them. The infantry with flame throwers ,moved close to the walls of buildings to the next barricade. Firing from mgs at windows of buildings on the opposite side of the street. The machine gunners went around barricades and shot the gun crews of the enemy. On their signal, tanks emerged from the shelters, reached the new barricade and again started to fire along the street. The Germans who wanted to destroy the tanks and who stayed in ambushes sent several faust shells at the tanks. By morning of 1 May the 55th Guards Rifle Division conducted a simultaneous attack from south and west and took a major railway junction, Westkreuz, and sealed the exit to Potsdam. Fighting Wilmersdorf and Westend on 1 May. By 9 o'clock on 2 May had cleared Savigny station. Up to Kudamm.

The Soviet military authorities were convinced that most German soldiers fought only because they feared execution. They had reports that a number of Poles drafted into the 20th Panzer Grenadier Division all wanted to surrender, 'but they are afraid of German officers and SS troops who are watching them with particular attention.' TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.179

The Nordland commander, Brigadeführer Krukenberg, soon found that the defence plan for Sector Z was no more than a 'paper exercise'. On the afternoon of 26 April, he decided to discuss the situation with the Waffen-SS liaison officer in the Reich Chancellery, Gruppenführer Fegelein. The Führerbunker was full of senior Nazi Party officials in their brown uniforms with gold and red decorations. Krukenberg heard one of them dictate to a secretary the phrase of the moment: 'to be relieved of his post forthwith'. He asked his SS escort who he was. The man was astonished that he had not recognised Martin Bormann. 'paper exercise', BA-MA MSg2/ 1283 p.20 'nur eine Papierarbeit' 'mit sofortiger Wirkung seines Postens enthoben'.

They continued to a slightly larger room where Fegelein joined them. Krukenberg described the situation and asked for his support to increase the Waffen-SS presence in the centre, an area which had a special significance. As luck would have it, General Weidling entered the room at that moment. Krukenberg repeated what he had been saying. The end result was that Krukenberg was told to set up a new command post in the U-Bahn station Stadtmitte and take orders from the commander of the Führer's bodyguard, Brigadeführer Mohnke. Since Mohnke was junior to him, Krukenberg was hardly pleased at this outcome.

On the way out, Fegelein introduced Krukenberg to Goebbels. As Fegelein was explaining Krukenberg's task, Goebbels interrupted to ask his 'uncosmetic' impression of the morale of his troops. Krukenberg replied that they consisted of the most determined Waffen-SS volunteers from a wide range of European countries, including a high percentage of students and young workers. This meant that they could be relied on to fight as individuals in the ruined areas of the city. Naturally, they were worn out after a retreat which had lasted from the edge of Leningrad to Berlin. But they would make a stand here to protect their own homelands from the threat of Bolshevism. 'uncosmetic' impression of the morale of his troops BA-MA MSg2/ 1283 p.22 'ein ungeschminktes Bild'.

Goebbels apparently listened to this answer with 'a very pensive expression'. He then told Krukenberg that 'negotiations with the western powers were not going badly'. In addition he had just heard that Wenck's army was already approaching the Havel. Its attack would relieve the whole front. All that was needed was resistance for just a few more days. A Soviet success would on the other hand throw everything into question. Krukenberg assumed that because these statements came from the highest military headquarters, there was no reason to doubt them. 'mit sehr nachdenklichem Gesicht' 'daß die Verhandlungen mit dem Westen nicht schlecht stünden'

Chapter 22 Fighting in the Forest

When a Flugkurrier from Berlin brought batches of leaflets which 'die Soldaten der Armee anfeuern sollten, Berlin und den Führer zu entsetzen' ('were intended to encourage the soldiers of the Army to relieve Berlin and the Führer'. Wenck made sure that these leaflets were not distributed, 'sondern verbrennen lassen'. 'but he had them burned instead'. Reichhelm papers, p.173

Broadcasting in the forest. The 28th Army reported that 836 German officers and soldiers had surrendered 'walking towards the sound of our loudspeakers'. TsAMO 236/2675/267 p.189

The tactic of sending back prisoners also worked well. On 29 April, Obergefreiter Paul G from the 275th Infantry Division was sent to encourage his former comrades to surrender. He brought back sixty of them. He returned twice more and persuaded another fifty Volkssturm men to defect. When an officer tried to intervene, he was tied up and left in the forest. TsAMO 236/2675/267 p.190

Order of State Committee of Defence.

Draft order. On cancelling the blackout in Moscow Oblast. Draft Order. On altering the blackout regime on the territory. GARF 9401/2/95 p.33128

State Defence Committee. A special council of the NKVD of the USSR on 28 April 1945 has considered investigation materials for 891 men, of whom 2 are sentenced to execution and 889 including 268 members of families of traitors of the Motherland, to different terms of punishment. GARF 9401/2/95 pp.324 28 April.

Heinz Lorenz, Hitler's press officer, escaped pretending to be a Luxemburg journalist called Georges Thiers. Arrested by a British field security section attached to the American Counter Intelligence Corps, he was betrayed by the wad of high denomination Reichsmark notes with consecutive serial numbers. In Camp 031, Lorenz was interrogated further by Captain William Oughton. Eventually a copy of Hitler's will and testament sewn up in the shoulder of his jacket was found by chance, when a sergeant grabbed him by the shoulder.

Senior Lieutenant Nikolai Vassilievich Leonov with the artillery of the 1st Guards Tank Army, rapidly realised that his field guns needed to be used almost like tanks. Rule books on ranging and bracketing could be forgotten. They had to be positioned rapidly in unexpected places, such as gateways, and fired over open sights. On 28 April, when the lead elements of 1st Guards Tank Army were held up by a railway embankment covered by the fire of defenders in fortified buildings behind, Leonov moved three guns rapidly under the railway bridge itself and although under heavy fire, engaged the buildings at short range. This gave the infantry the chance to swarm over the embankment above. TsAMO 33/793756/27 p.263

We learned about it from reports from headquarters of 130th Rifle Division which had been fighting on the line Teupitz-Seeen-Töpchin. I was also informed by Marshal Konev on the telephone. To strengthen the link with the 3rd Guards Army in the area of Teupitz, I ordered the commander of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps, Major General Alexandrov, to concentrate the main forces of 54th Guards Rifle Division in the area of the Wolzigersee, south west to Neuendorf /Zesch am See. The headquarters of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps arrived in Baruth on 25 April. By this time artillery regiments from all divisions of this corps which had been marching independently in columns of vehicles had also concentrated in the area of Baruth Mückendorf-Papitz. By this time the command of the Ninth German Army managed to regroup their troops, and to concentrate in the area of Märkisch Bucholz, Halbe and Teurow, the units of the 21st Panzer Division, 10th SS Panzer Division, Kurmark Panzergrenadier Division and 712th Infantry Division also the remains of the 32nd SS Division and the 169th infantry Division [check units]. In total about 50,000 men.

At dawn on 26 April, the enemy started active reconnaissance in the Töpchin and Baruth area. And after 8am attacked with infantry tanks and half tracks started advancing from Halbe through forests north of Baruth towards Luckenwalde. After they crossed the railway line north of Baruth, the Germans encountered the artillery of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps and the battle started. The commander of the 50th Guards Rifle Division which was moving from Luckau to Baruth, Major General Vladychansky, received the task to help the artillery to hold the route to Zossen and to defend Baruth. This Division which stretched out into one line, quickly created a shield which stopped the enemy from cutting the 28th Army's line of communications. On the morning of 26 April, I arrived in Yachsenbruch ?? [not found on map but near Neuendorf] to see the commander of 54th Guards Rifle Division, Major General Danilov. I made use of the newly established telephone connection with the commander of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps in Baruth and told him to organise 'a decisive liquidation of the enemy', who were attacking the 50th Guards Rifle Division north east of Baruth. I ordered him to send in the 96th Guards Rifle Division which was in Golßen [SW of Baruth] after a night march. The anti-tank regiment was moved from Zossen to Kummersdorf to create an anti-tank screen there. [SW of Zossen]. The 55th Guards Rifle Division, which had been in reserve and was starting to move towards Teltow, was halted south of Zossen. And the 71st Motorized Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Guards Tank Army I sent to Sperenberg. I had to move my own cp from Teltow to facilitate control of troops. At 1400 on 26 April, the 96th Guards Rifle Division which had advanced from Golßen and was commanded by Major General Kuztensov, and attacked the enemy off the march and forced him to retreat behind the autobahn south of Teupitz. The 50th and 96th Guards Rifle Division were introduced into the battle without information about the situation.

During the night and the next day, the 27 April, the Germans attacked persistently along two axes. In the south from Halbe through Radeland towards Baruth, and in the north from Teupitz through Yachsenbruch ?? near Neuendorf due west towards Sperenberg. On the southern axis the majority of German attacks had been fought back by the units of the 96th Guards Rifle Division with great losses on the German side. Some units of the enemy reached Baruth via Radeland and the Guards including the commander of the 291st Guards Rifle Regiment Lieutenant Colonel Andryushchenko, seized attics and basements and fought on although encircled until the 150th Guards Rifle Regiment that was defending Baruth restored the situation in Radeland. On the northern axis, several thousand Germans with 20 tanks drove a wedge into the 54th

Guards Rifle Division, captured Zesch am See and surrounded the 3rd battalion, the headquarters and special units of 160 Rifle Regiment. After that they headed for Kummersdorf. Here they were stopped by Soviet soldiers who fought them back despite big losses. By the end of 27 April, they together with the 68th Guards Tank Brigade, which had come to help, cleared the Baruth Wünsdorf highway, and during the counter-attack the commander of 148 Guards Rifle Regiment Lieutenant Colonel Ratner, who led the battle, was killed in his tank. As a result of the two days of fighting, divisions of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps captured 5,942 men, 39 serviceable tanks, 36 other armoured vehicles.

On the Baruth axis there was a temporary lull, but the Germans had not stopped hoping trying to break out of the encirclement. Under then increasing pressure of the armies of the 1st Belorussian Front from the east, and the 1st Ukrainian Front from the south, the remains of the Ninth Army were squashed into the area of Märkisch Bucholz, Halbe, Teurow and Teupitz. During the night of 28 April, they undertook their last desperate attempt to break the ring. By the end of 29 April the Germans managed to breach the 50th Guards Rifle Division to break through our inner front of the encirclement and to advance west reaching the line Trebbin Luckenwalde. 'For this they paid in heavy losses.'

However, under flank attacks from our troops, this enemy group was stretched in a narrow strip not more than five to six kilometres wide and was split into three parts. The eastern part in the Halbe area, the main central part and the biggest, in the forest Stadtsförst-Schtakow; and the western around Kummersdorf. On 30 April, the situation in the area of fighting was extremely complicated. Germans attacking desperately to fight out towards the west. Forest area. Few villages and roads. Easy to get lost. Made it easier for enemy to hide and to conduct close-quarter combat. Having divisions from different Fronts and lacking 'a united command and communications made it impossible to establish an organised operation'. As the 3rd Guards Corps had been cut off from the 28th Army, 1st Ukrainian Front headquarters took command of it. It sent its representative, Lieutenant General Grechkin. Konev ordered the commander of the 13th Army to send three rifle divisions to defend the line Luckenwalde Trebbin and had allocated the 63rd Guards Tank Brigade from the 4th Guards Tank Army, six aviation corps of the 2nd Air Army. Luchinsky, A.; Na Berlin!, VIZh, No.5, May 1965

Chapter 23 The Betrayal of the Will

The 5th Shock Army 60th Guards Rifle Division. Recce groups probing into Berlin. 'In each group there were one or two Party members who were there to act as an example to the others'. Junior Sergeant Gerasimov, cited as an outstanding young Party member with leadership ability, cried: 'Let's trample the fascist lair' and ran to the building. TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.571

'We came across a group of "fausters" and snipers who blocked our way. Sergeant Didienko jumped through a window in the next door building and called out: "I've found a way! Follow me!". The recce group managed to get round through the courtyard behind and take the "fausters" in the rear'. Sergeant Didienko displayed 'an exceptional courage'. Apparently, he ran up to the third floor, where 'snipers' were in action - they were probably just ordinary riflemen - and killed three of them with his sub-machine gun. 'The fourth fascist managed to fire and wounded the hero, but the Communist still grasped his sub-machine gun and fired a burst at the insolent man who needed to be taught a lesson.' Once the building was secured, his comrades carried the wounded Didienko back towards a dressing station. 'Avenge my blood!' he is said to have urged them. 'The Reichstag is not far now. It is such a pity that I will not take part in the battle for it.' TsAMO 233/2374/93 p.572-4

24 April Bodies of two soldiers of Red Army found decapitated in a house in Besdorf. RGVA 32925/1/130 p278

26 April. More Red Army soldiers found murdered. In the night of 27 April in the town of Buckow, a Red Army gunner was stabbed to death. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.285

On the 29th, we were moved to the area of Tiergarten. The night of 29-30th April was the most frightful time. By midnight, everything froze, not a single shot, not a sound, the quietness was unbearable. There were only ruins around us, everything lay in ruins. By 4 in the morning of the 30th, we heard motors. I ordered to lay mines around Tiergarten and camouflaged them by pieces of brick. Soon, a Ferdinand got blown up on one of these mines. It belonged to the SD. They jumped out and we opened fire. They surrendered immediately, shouting 'Hitler kaputt' and were taken away by a commandant's section, and we continued to mine. Captain Shota Sulkhaniashvili 1st Byelorussian Front, 3rd Shock Army, 79th Rifle Corps. (conversation February 2001)

DRK-Schwester Ruth Schwarz from Potsdam Child clinic

29 April Halted in Lindau. Patients unloaded. Buses arrived to take them away. Locals helped with the task. Brought food. Even milk was procured. Kinderklinik set up. Lindau itself became a Lazarettstadt. Wounded soldiers lying around the Altstadt. Fear that Wehrmacht would defend the town and that it would be bombed as a result. Wir sind fassungslos. Bewildered. Anti-tank barriers constructed despite strong protests of civilian population. White flags hung from windows. Fortunately the small garrison commanded by a Lieutenant decided to pull back over the river to surrender to the Americans. American armoured vehicles half tracks appeared. Amis took children and 4 May, to everyone's horror, T 34s appeared. Germans from Baltic states started writing signs in Russian that houses contained infectious cases. omen running to houses with sick for protection. A pregnant woman shot. Russians drunk. Demanded nurses for their entertainment. 'verlangen Schwestern zu ihrem Vergnügen'. Only with the greatest difficulty were they dissuaded. Ramm, p.233.

On 28 April, Major Bezborodov, whose sub-machine gunners had caused such chaos at Buchholz, was leading his men in the fighting north up the Charlottenstrasse, parallel to the Freidrichstrasse. His sub-machine gun detachments, 'acted daringly and skilfully, clearing one building after another, and room and after room.' The battalion's score rose to '329 soldiers and officers liquidated'. Prisoners were no longer listed.

TsAMO 33/793756/5 p.11

Chapter 24 Führerdämmerung

In April 1945, 3rd Shock Army commanded by General Kuznetsov. Nine red banners to be placed on the Reichstag issued out by political department of the 3rd Shock Army. When we attacked Berlin each division of the 79th Rifle Corps given a banner. Corps commanded by Major General Perevertkin. On 26 April, one of the se banners was given to 756 Regiment, commanded by Colonel Zinchenko of 150 Rifle

Division, and during the storming of the Reichstag, this banner was carried by the regiment's recce men, covered by the 1st Battalion of which Neustroev was the commander.

As soon as the 79th Corps reached the Spree, it received the following tasks. 171st Rifle Division was to force out of the corner building of KronPrinzen Ufer, in which there was a big strong point that was an obstacle on our way to the Reichstag. 150th Rifle Division was ordered to seize the Ministry of Internal Affairs and then advance to the Reichstag. 207th Rifle Division had to attack Kroll Opera, which would make it easier to storm the Reichstag. That could only be done after our Division seized the min of Internal Affairs. We called this 'Himmler's House'. By noon of 28 April 1945, after the hard street battles, our battalion approached the Spree. The units of the 1st battalion of 674 Regiment of our Division and the 1st battalion of 380 Regiment of 171 Division, which were our neighbours, were on the same start line. During the years of war, the battalion had crossed many rivers, but this was the first time we had seen such a river. The Spree's banks, dressed in granite, were high and perpendicular. How was it to be crossed? The bridge called Moltke captured our attention. Its entrance and exit were barricaded. It was mined and covered with barbed wire and protected by several layers of cross-firing machine guns and cannons, placed in different stories and attics. German heavy guns on Konigsplatz firing the northern bank of the Spree and the Alt Moabitstrasse. In the evening, the air was shaken by a deafening explosion. The Germans had blown up the Moltke bridge, but not entirely successfully. It had only sagged in the middle. And we decided to use it to cross the Spree. At 18.00hrs, the regimental commanders gave the order to start crossing the Spree. I sent for Junior Sergeant Petr Pyatnitsky [Friday] and ordered him and his platoon to carry out a reconnaissance in force and if possible cross the river. Bullets were whistling and shells and mines were exploding. The Spree became clouded with smoke. Under heavy fire, Pyatnitsky's platoon reached the barricade at the north end of the bridge and took cover there. I reported situation to regimental commander and he promised artillery support. Soon artillery officers arrived at my command post and at 20.00, artillery preparation began. The artillery managed to suppress the enemy firepoints on the opposite bank of the Spree. The fire of our artillery was so effective that the Germans had to cease rifle and machine gun fire. This was the right moment to cross the river. Sappers started to de-mine the bridge. The platoon commanded by Pyatnitsky was the first to cross the river. It was followed by the platoon commanded by Sergeant Petr Shchbina, and soon they broke into the buildings in which the enemy was entrenched, and began to fight them. The fire became weaker and the main forces of the battalion - a rifle company commanded by Senior Sergeant S'yanov Ilya Jakovlevich, machine-gun company commanded by Lieutenant Gerasimov and a mortar company by Captain Morgun. By 24.00, the battalion was across the Spree, but fighting had not ceased for a minute. The fighting spirits of the battalion were exceptionally high. Everyone knew that it was just five hundred metres between us and the Reichstag, on which the Motherland had ordered us to put up a red banner. And of course everyone wanted to be the first in this decisive battle. The main forces of the 150 and 171 Rifle Divisions crossed during the night of 28 April and spent the whole of 29 April in heavy battles. The 150 Rifle Division was fighting for Himmler's House and 171 in the buildings just to the east, [Diplomatic quarter]. Our battalion continued advancing, and by the morning of 29 April came up to the huge building of the Ministry of the Interior which was defended by SS soldiers. This huge and gloomy building, with walls in the ground floor and semi-basement, two metres thick, and fortified with an earth embankment. Doors and windows were blocked up and barricaded. In the windows, the Germans made embrasures, and from them they covered both banks of the Spree with fire. The situation became clear to us only after we had taken this strong point, so we had to storm it. Fighting in Berlin. Himmler's house. Used individual Katyushas attached to a piece of railway track as a launcher. Conversation Belayev

Freytag von Loringhoven's escape.

Got a small folding boat. Havel two kilometres wide. Rowed to Fauensinsel in Wannsee, the troops in a Stutzpunkt there decided to break out, complete chaos. When it got light we hid in the woods. Boldt and he hid in the wood in Wannsee. Lost Oberst Weiss, captured by Poles. Lay there during the day. Russians came with dogs. Boldt sick because he had not eaten anything. Boldt sicked up the pills. Carried Boldt to Wannsee. Russians swarming out at night to see what they could get. They hid in an allotment shed belonging to railway worker. Found a few bags of oats. Made porridge. Sat there for two days eating porridge with Boldt. Already got rid of weapons. Now wanted to get rid of uniforms. The railway workers had left some raglike and dirty overalls. We decided that we were Luxemburgers. As civilian Luxemburgers, we walked through Russian lines. We talked French to the Russians. The Americans arrested them on the streets in Leipzig and the Americans passed him to British. Interrogated by Trevor-Roper. Freytag von Loringhoven conversation 4 October 1999

Runov Boris Alexandrovich 'Znanie nemetskogo pomoglo vzyat' v plen soten shest' nemtsev', in Vsem smertyam nazlo, Moscow, 2000

Had swum the Neisse on 14 April with a group of soldiers and performed the recce of crossing place. Received order to move. To stop Germans escaping from Halbe Kessel. 'In front of the forest, I made my platoon into a cordon, with no greater gap between soldiers of fifty metres. Our tanks stayed behind a building two hundreds metres from the edge of the forest. We passed through a small wood and reached a wide clearing. On the far side we saw a dense mass of Germans coming out of the forest including some on horses. They were all coming towards us. I gave the command: 'Don't shoot and pull back quickly to the tanks'. But then an unexpected thing happened. Several of the enemy on horseback galloped forward into the clearing and encircled me. It would have been madness to fight them on my own. Meanwhile my soldiers following my order, had already disappeared into the forest. I felt a burning resentment. At how upsetting it was to die on 1 May 1945, right on the eve of victory. I decided to start negotiations using the limited vocabulary at my command. 'Surrender if you want to stay alive', I said trying to pick the right words. 'Berlin has fallen and your resistance is useless. And you should know that if you carry on in this direction you will meet our tanks and die just the same.' They understood me and they all stopped to listen. Suddenly I saw a German major elbowing his way through the crowd and pulling a pistol out of his holster. Just in case, I took a grenade out of my pocket. He ran up to me, stuck the pistol muzzle in my belly and said: 'One more word and you will be dead'. The German major was sober. He saw the grenade in my hand. He realised that to kill me would be suicide. So there we were standing in front of each other, he with the pistol and I with the grenade. And suddenly and unexpectedly for me and for everyone, many German soldiers raised their voices: 'Let's surrender. Berlin has fallen. It's better to give in here than under gunfire.' I was very surprised myself. It was not like the German Army. They had been wandering several days in the forest, cut off, hungry and utterly demoralised. And some of them were wounded.

Three more officers approached me. One of them, another major, asked in broken Russian to repeat what I had said. I answered trying to speak as quietly and clearly as possible: 'If I say those words again, this major will shoot me.' The second major told the first major to put his pistol away, then he told me in Russian to put the grenade away. The angry major obeyed his order, but not at once. He claimed that because I carried a German smg and a Parabellum that I must have killed Germans. Angry major put his Luger back in his holster and told me to repeat what I had said. 'If you want to stay alive, surrender. It is stupid to fight on. Those who want to survive, put your weapons on one side and sit on the other. 'We have all been fighting almost four years. It is time to finish it.'

Some sat down, some lay down, but did not put aside weapons. About a hundred decided to continue

their advance. I promised them that if they surrendered our tanks would not open fire, but if they continued towards our tanks, our troops would certainly open fire.

Russian tanks open fire. He runs back two hundred metres towards his own tanks. Took out a handkerchief and waved it. They spotted him and ceased fire. Ordered tanks to move towards those who wanted to surrender. Reached the clearing. Where most of the Germans were concentrated. They themselves threw down their weapons and raised their hands.

Speer: 'Germany's leaders were victims of their own propaganda myths', because they were sealed off from 'all sources of criticism and free comment.' Most of the Nazi leadership, according to Speer, 'believed that the German people could not survive defeat and hence there was no reason to leave them the means for survival.' This was inspired by a mixture of 'spite or desire for a Götterdämmerung'. NA 740.0011 EW/5-145

Victory was close but the guns did not slow down their rate of fire. One gun-crew, firing a round every few minutes right through the last night of April, was asked by nearby soldiers when they were going to stop making such a racket. 'When the last Fritz in Berlin has surrendered.' To make the point, the next fire order was: 'At Fritz exhaustion fire!' TsAMO 236/2675/149 p.262

Major General Franz in a written statement for US Seventh Army 'The influence of the civilian population has considerably undermined the combat vigour and the morale of officers and men. Women would say every day to our men that it was absurd to continue the fighting, that they had civilian clothing ready for them, that the defence of towns would only have the mad result of destroying the life and possessions of women and children.' Admitted that he gave orders to open fire on women who removed barricades to a town near Kaiserslautern when they heard that enemy tanks were approaching. Americans did not bother to open fire on groups of Germans unless they fired. SHAT 7 P 102

Attitude of German population

At Oberndorf women massed on the ancient bridge which the SS planned to blow up before moving out and saved it.

In Bavaria they blamed the war on the 'Prussians' while the Berliners saw Munich as the cradle of Nazism. Conclusion: 'Toutefois, si l'Allemagne est vaincu militairement elle ne l'est ni moralement, ni intellectuellement: elle garde en elle même assez de dynamisme, assez de forces vives, de forces latentes, pour préparer, à la faveur d'une désunion ou d'un désaccord entre les vainqueurs, les bases d'une revanche ultérieure.' [Situation en Allemagne à la veille de la capitulation, SHAT 7 P 127]

On 28 April, Major Bezborodov, whose sub-machine gunners had caused such chaos at Buchholz, was leading his men in the fighting north up the Charlottenstrasse, parallel to the Friedrichstrasse. His sub-machine gun detachments, 'acted daringly and skilfully, clearing one building after another, and room and after room.' The battalion's score rose to '329 soldiers and officers liquidated'. Prisoners were no longer listed.

TsAMO 33/793756/5 p.11

In same letter of 28 April, Goebbels claims that 'Wir sitzen eingeschlossen im Führerbunker in der Reichskanzlei und kämpfen um unser Leben und um unser Ehre.' Hirschfeld and Renz, pp. 107-8

When the 350 strong garrison of the Zoo flak tower finally emerged, Colonel Haller apparently tipped off one of the Soviet officers that there were two generals hidden inside, who hoped to slip out of Berlin. One of them, who committed suicide on discovery, was shown to the writer Konstantin Simonov the next day. Haller, TsAMO 233/2374/93 pp.458-9

After giving orders to the Nordland sappers, Krukenberg went to the heavily bombarded air ministry. He ordered Luftwaffe personnel out into defensive positions, despite the protestations of a senior Luftwaffe officer who insisted that he and his men did not come under Weidling's command. A confusing message then arrived from Mohnke's staff in the Reich Chancellery saying that there had been 'a misunderstanding'. More detailed orders would follow in the course of the morning. The misunderstanding was never explained.

4 May Moscow press carries message of Patriarch Aleksei 'News of the capture of Berlin by our valiant troops led and inspired by your genius has filled the hearts of all true sons of our homeland with boundless joy and rejoicing. Our church offering grateful prayer to God on this historic day deepens its prayers for you, beloved supreme leader of our people'. NA RG59 740.0011 E.W./5-445

Chapter 26 The End of the Battle

Berlin had already been taken and the Banner of Victory on the Reichstag, but large groups of the enemy were still resisting violently. The rifle company commanded by Lieutenant Mamed Badaev, a twenty-year old from the small Turkmenian village of Anau, was pushing on towards the west. It had wedged deeply into the retreating columns of Germans and was suddenly surrounded by the enemy who had tanks and self-propelled guns. Our soldiers were not many, but the frightened fascists thought them to be the advance guard of an advancing Soviet Division. A German officer walked out onto the road from a little wood. He was waving his underwear tied to a bayonet. The German cried, our General is ready to start negotiations. 'All right', said Mamed. 'The company commander will come to the negotiations.'

'The General will never agree to negotiate with a person who is lower in rank than he is. He will wait for your General.'

As our General was not available, the company commander started preparing for the negotiations. 'Only where can I get a general's uniform,' he wondered. 'Then someone remembered that under battle conditions they had seen Rokossovsky in a leather jacket and riding breeches without a stripe, and I had seen a General wearing a camouflage coverall, just like the one I am wearing, said a sniper. This covered his shoulder boards. This only left exposed his face and chest. We gathered up all the orders we could find in the company, including four orders of the Red Banner and two rows of the Order of the Great Patriotic War. There was no room left. Mamed walked onto the main road. His aides walked on each side of him, one pace behind. The German General accompanied by two officers appeared from behind the trucks covered in smoke, marching as if on parade. The distance narrowed and one could already see the white scar on his cheek and the triangle of the ribbon holding a cross at his neck. With a discreet movement, Mamed opened his camouflage overall to show the orders.

'General Joachim von Schlupke, barked the fascist.

'General Mamed from Anau', replied Mamed.

'So General', said Schlupke ingratiatingly. 'This evil comedy is coming to an end. I suggest a sensible solution. We will lay down our weapons without resistance, and you let me and my officers go because it is more convenient for us if we surrender to your allies.'

'Strange to hear that', Mamed laughed. 'We are taking you prisoners now. And you also want to surrender to our allies. So from one prison into another one. My condition is that you throw all your weapons in the ditch and line up on the road to be marched to our rear.'

Several years after these events, one of our international historians was leafing through the Sud-Deutsche Zeitung and found an interesting article there. It said that war criminal Joachim von Schlupke, who was given to the West German authorities for further punishment gave an interview to the newspaper. The General was very unlucky at the end of the war. He was just a few kilometres from the Elbe, and if he had managed to get to the opposite bank, he would not have been on the special bench in the court for criminals.

'What happened?'

'I was captured by General Mamed. Unfortunately I do not remember his difficult family name. Shatunovsky, Ilya: 'I ostanetsya dobryi sled' in Vsem smertyam nazlo, Moscow, 2000

Thought of previous May days and where they had been. The tankists were in front, as usual, and breaking through the battle front of the enemy. Fought for town of Stolp, junction of rail and motorways. Ahead of us Swinemunde and Stettin.

Learned of capitulation 8 May when outburst of firing. Rockets in sky. At first we wondered has the enemy come to life again? I too unloaded my TT into the sky'.

Chinar'yan, Ivan: 'Moi mesyats mai' in Stroki s velikoi voiny, Moscow 2000

My company started moving towards the Brandenburg Tor together with a company of navy infantry. Reichchancellery was a few hundred meters south. It was a building with a 2-3 storied basement and two entrances. An armoured vehicle stood near the front entrance. The second entrance led directly into the bunker and we entered through it. This was on the 1st May. Captain Shota Sulxhanishvili 1st Byelorussian Front, 3rd Shock Army, 79th Rifle Corps.(conversation February 2001)

'At midnight on 8 May, in Karlshorst in eastern Berlin, in a two-storey building of the former canteen of German military engineering college, representatives of the German High Command, Field Marshal Keitel, Admiral von Friedenburg, and Luftwaffe Colonel General Stumpf, in the presence of the representative of the Stavka, the commander of 1st Belorussian Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union, and the representative of the commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, Air Marshal Tedder, signed the act of surrender of the German armed forces.'

'On 5 May at 1400 in the village of Lebusa, situated forty kilometres NE of Torgau, commander of 1st Ukrainian Front, Marshal Comrade Konev, met the commander-in-chief of the Twelfth Army Group, General Bradley. The meeting was attended on the American side by General Bradley, chief of staff of the Army Group, Lieutenant General Allen, chief of the operations department of the headquarters of the Army Group, senior officers of the headquarters and a big group of correspondents and cameramen. On our side, by Marshal Comrade Konev, members of the military council of the Front, Lieutenant General Krainyukov, Kal'chenko, and chief of staff of 1st Ukrainian Front, Army General Petrov, deputy commanders of the Front, chiefs of departments, commander of the 5th Guards Army, Colonel General Zhadov, commander of 34th Guards Rifle Corps, Guards Major General Baklanov, representatives of central and Front newspapers cameramen and phot correspondents. Marshal Konev met his guests by the entrance of the building, greeted them then invited them to the hall. A dinner was given preceded by Comrade Konev's brief speech on the victorious role of the Red Army which went from Stalingrad to the Elbe.

General Bradley who spoke during the dinner, spoke of the courage and bravery of Russian soldiers guided by Marshal Stalin, the bravery of the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, set an example for American soldiers officers and generals. Signed

Chief of political department 1st Ukrainian Front to chief of GLAVPURKKA 7 May 1945. TsAMO
236/2712/366 pp.224-228

The mass of foreign workers setting off home on foot, by bicycle or even horse and cart, all liberated from their former jailers, presented 'le spectacle d'une veritable Babel', in the words of a French Army report of 10 May.

[Situation en Allemagne à la veille de la capitulation, SHAT 7 P 127]

Twelfth Army Headquarters

Had contact with 21st Army of General von Tippelskirch, but no real liaison. Everything breaking up. Humboldt spoke to la of 21st Army 1 or 2nd May. An old regimental friend . 'Bei mir lauft alles'. 'Bei mir auch.' Everything's running, but really saying everyone's running away. Then telephone line cut. Humboldt conversation October 1999.

SS tatoos Finally discovered by Soviet forces

At NKVD Camp No. 27 agents discovered that German soldiers and officers who were in the SS have their blood group tatoored on their left arm. SS soldier Luwig Hoffmann confirmed this information during interrogation and said that all soldiers and officers of the SS Division Wiking, had blood tests and it was tatoored on the inside of the left arm. As a result of checking this camp, 39 prisoners were revealed who had letters tatoored. They all confirmed that they were in SS troop or police units. Such checks are being performed in other camps too. GARF 9401/2/100 p.492 Beria to Stalin etc 20 November

NKVD of the USSR reports that according to information received from General Golikov, the number of people in the Vlasov corps, to be handed over by the English is 40,000 people, of which 9,000 are members of families and 1,000 are German instructors. After they are handed over by the English, the Vlasov soldiers will be sent to three camps: Graz, Bruck and Leoben, all situated to the south of Vienna. All Vlasov soldiers and their families will be sent to the following camps: Kizelovsky, screening camp No 0302 to work on coal, 12,000 men; Prokop'ievsky, screening camp No. 0315, in Kusbas, 12,000; Kemerovo, screening camp No. 0314, Kusbas, 7,000; Prokop'ievsky, camp No. 525, 9,000; all German instructors and officers from the Vlasov corps will be sent to Prokop'ievsky NKVD camp. The camps where Vlasov's soldiers will be kept will be guarded by a strengthened guard of NKVD convoy troops. The screening of Vlasov soldiers in the camps will be carried out by operative departments of the camps and SMERSH departments of the camps. The reception of Vlasov soldiers will be headed by Lieutenant General of NKVD troops, Gorbatyuk. For guarding and conveying Vlasov soldiers, NKVD troops used for guarding the rear areas of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts will be used. GARF 9401/2/96 p.169 20 May Beria to Stalin and Molotov

7 May. Russian reason for not announcing victory. Red Army high command did not believe that the order of 'the German high command on unconditional surrender will be carried out by the German forces on the Eastern Front. 'We would turn out to be in an embarrassing position, and would mislead the public opinion of the Soviet Union.' [as if public opinion in the Soviet Union had never been misled before] Proposed postponing 'the announcements by Governments of the German surrender to 9 May at 7 o'clock in the evening'. NARA RG334/Entry309/Box2 Antonov correspondence

Russian anger at Allies taking surrender.

Eisenhower to Antonov 7 May. 'I feel sure that you will understand that we have scrupulously adhered to the engagement of no separate truce on this front. When wholesale surrenders of enemy troops began taking place on our flanks, I offered to keep on pushing in the right center until we should meet the Red Army. This movement was restrained because of the receipt of information from the Russian high command that their commitment of large forces to the area involved would certainly result in confusion and entanglement.

'While a brief instrument of unconditional military surrender of which you have a copy was signed here at 0240 hours this morning, ... that instrument provides that the German high command is required to report at a time and place fixed for a more formal signing. I would be very happy to come to Berlin tomorrow at an hour specified by Marshal Zhukov, who I understand would be the Russian representative. I would desire the hour to be as near noon as in practicable in order that I might attend the meeting and return to my headquarters the same day. [Wanted to bring ten press correspondents and photographers to Berlin]

7 May letter from President asking that 'Marshal Stalin give his approval to announcing the German

capitulation at 7.00 pm Moscow time tonight.'

Truman compromise to delay until 4.00pm Moscow time the next day, 'unless Marshal Stalin indicated concurrence to an earlier hour'. [Eisenhower's party grew to five aircraft.]

The OKW in its Mürwik enclave on the Baltic just east of Flensburg complained that it was Soviet artillery fire which had continued after the surrender.

Monday 7 May a red sky in the evening which nobody appreciated because it made them think of all the earlier evenings when the skies had been red from flames. Anonymous, p.120

GARF 9401/2/95 p.355-6

To Beria from Selivanovsky. Re Night of 2 May doc dated 5 May

During night 2/3 May 1945, in connection with the capture of Berlin, the chief of Lodz garrison Major General ?? ordered directors of Lodz plants and factories to sound their factory whistles. At 2400 Moscow time. factory whistles sounded and batteries of anti-aircraft artillery opened fire. The operation of Lodz had no idea of the reason and in the confusion, ran from their apartments and hid in shelters. Meanwhile the patrols which consisted of a platoon of Kommandantur troops, some Polish troops and some guards and Red Army soldiers thought that the whistles signified danger and they opened chaotic fire thinking that the people passing on foot and in vehicles were attacking them. As a result, a corporal from the aviation base was heavily wounded and sent to hospital, and five others were wounded. Comrade Telegin of 1st Belorussian Front has been informed to take measures against the Major General.

GARF 9401/2/102 pp.13-17 27 November from Beria to Stalin

Radio messages of Borman and Hitler and radio messages of Field Marshal Schörner to Hitler that were found by the operative sector of the NKVD in Berlin in 'the ex-premises of Hitler's Chancellery'.

26 April 1945. 0408 radio message from Berlin. 'Stand fast, fight fanatically. We are not giving up. We are not surrendering. We sense some developments in policy abroad. Heil Hitler! Reichsleiter Borman.'

26 April 1945. 0547 radio message from Berlin to Führerbau in Munich. 'So far we have been using Gauleiters from the occupied regions only in battles or for Werwolf purposes. If necessary we will fight to the end. Reichsleiter Borman.'

GARF 9401/2/102 pp.13-17 27 November from Beria to Stalin

23 April 1945. To the Führer from General Field Marshal Schörner: 'Mein Führer. As a continuation of the conversation which we had last night, I will permit myself as your Field Marshal on behalf of all the valorous soldiers fighting for your cause and on behalf of the people who have lost their lives for your sake, to ask you my Führer in this critical moment to leave Berlin immediately and to take command of the Reich and the Wehrmacht in the southern theatre of military operations. You and you alone, mein Führer, are the guarantee of the Reich's continued existence, only to you is every German unquestionably obedient. Only you mein Führer, are the embodiment of Germany for every enemy state. With you, Germany will fall too. Millions of Germans want to build up the Reich again together with you, mein Führer. Nothing is lost yet. Everything can still be saved if only you were with us. This is our conviction, the conviction of soldiers and National Socialists. I repeat my appeal once again. On behalf of all those brave men who very well understand your unwillingness to leave Berlin. Long live mein Führer!

24 April 1945 from Hitler to Schörner. 'I am staying in Berlin to take part in the decisive battle with honour, the battle that Germany is now fighting, and to give a good example to all the others. I think that this is how I will render the best service to Germany. Every means should be tried to win the battle for Berlin. You can render decisive assistance if you break through to the north as soon as possible. With the expression of my sincere friendship. Yours Adolf Hitler.

Prikaz 0016 of the NKVD of the USSR 11 January 1945.

Measures of clearing the rear areas of the Red Army from enemy elements.

To secure clearing the rear areas of the operational Red Army of enemy elements, I order:

1. To appoint the following NKVD representatives at the Fronts. 2nd Baltic Front, Commissar of State Security of the Third Rank Comrade Kubatkin, chief of the NKGB department of the Leningrad oblast. 1st Baltic Front, Commissar of State Security Comrade Tkachenko, a representative of NKVD and NKGB in the Lithuanian Republic;

3rd Belorussian Front, Commissar of State Security of the Second Rank, Comrade Abakumov, chief of main SMERSH department; deputies Lieutenant General Comrade Zelenin, chief of SMERSH department of the front, and Lieutenant General Comrade Lubyi, chief of NKVD Troops on guarding the rears of the Front.

2nd Belorussian Front Commissar of State Security of the Third Rank, Comrade Tsanova, Commissar of state security of the Belorussian Republic.

1st Belorussian Front Commissar of State Security of the Second Rank Comrade Serov, deputy people's commissar of internal affairs of the USSR; deputies Lieutenant General Comrade Vadis, chief of SMERSH department of the Front, and Major General Comrade Zimin, chief of NKVD troops guarding the rear areas of the Front

1st Ukrainian Front; Lieutenant General Comrade Meshik, deputy chief of main department of SMERSH; deputies, Lieutenant General Comrade Osetrov, chief of SMERSH department of the Front, and Major General Comrade Zubarev, chief of NKVD troops guarding the rear areas of the Front.

Prikaz 0016 of the NKVD of the USSR 11 January 1945. Appointment of SMERSH and NKVD chiefs 'to carry out the necessary Chekist measures'.

2nd Baltic 12, 113 Frontier Guards Regiment and 338 NKVD Rifle Regiment total 4,020 men.

1st Baltic. 31,33, 216 Frontier Guards Regiments and 329 NKVD Rifle Regiment total 5,004

3rd Belorussian. 13,86,132,217,331 Frontier Guards Regiment and 57 NKVD Interior Troops Rifle Division, including 369, 370 and 371 NKVD Rifle Regiments total 12,035 men. !!!!! Why so strong under Abakumov

2nd Belorussian. 87,218, 219, 332 Frontier Guards Regiments and 63 Rifle Division of Interior NKVD Troops consisting of 32 Motor Rifle Regiment, 273 Rifle Regiment and 108 Frontier Guards Regiment total 9,993 men.

1st Belorussian Front. 38, 127, 157, 333 Frontier Guards Regiments and 64th Rifle Division of NKVD Internal Troops consisting of 2,18,98 Frontier Guards Regiments and 145 Rifle Regiment of NKVD. Total number 11,160 men.

1st Ukrainian Front. 16, 83, 334, Frontier Guards Regiments and 11 Frontier Guards Regiment and 104 Frontier Guards Detachment of NKVD, total 7,331 men.

GARF 9401/2/96 p.139-142. 18 May.

Paulus private comments probably picked up by microphone: 'I am surprised that it was Keitel who signed this act of unconditional surrender. Keitel, this unjustifiable war criminal. Thank God, it's all finished. But there's one thing I want to say. If I was asked to sign a capitulation in Berlin I would probably do it, but I would have hidden my pride very deeply. Why all this theatre? I don't understand Keitel.' Colonel van Oven, vice-president of the BDO: 'English and Americans are soldiers by nature, although the spirit of militarism does not dominate them. And I can very well imagine that all this procedure with signatures, the whole story of capitulation was abhorrent to them. And Zhukov said after the end of the ceremony: 'Now the German delegation can go.' I do not think that this sounded at all nice.'

General von Seydlitz: 'Thank God, it's all finished at last. Field Marshal Jodl and others went to Rheims because they wanted to capitulate only to the western countries. This idiots really believed that they could

play the allies off against each other. At any rate, it was good that this shameful document was signed by Keitel and the others. During this they put their signature to their own evil deeds in front of the whole world and their own people above all. Soon the Allies will organise the economic life of Germany, sooner than we think. I think that it will be the Russians who will set the agenda in Berlin.'

General Lattman: 'Everything was ruined with as much disgrace as the people deserved. These people will never be able to create a heroic drama out of National Socialism. It's the past. Many generals have covered themselves with disgrace. People who told others that after a defeat in battle, the troop leader can only seek death, are surrendering as if nothing has happened. It is a shame that such a brilliant army as the German one has been so illused. This hurts the old soldier, a soldier in body and soul, right in the heart. And there was a time when we followed this gang with a faith in our souls.' GARF 9401/2/96 p. 143 18 May.

Chapter 27 Vae Victis!

The first days of occupation marked in the words of one officer by an 'expectant stupour', according to a French officer attached to US Seventh Army. Signs at entry to villages: 'No speeding, no looting no fraternizing'. SHAT 8 P 27

Germans were shocked, even hurt and insulted, by the non-fraternisation order.

US Troops

German girls and American soldiers. Non-fraternization. One officer wrote with amusement in a report about German girls 'flirting furiously' with American soldiers despite the non-fraternization order. In most areas under American occupation, one could see 'girls, usually in pairs, dressed and rouged prettily, strolling just outside the restricted areas where soldiers are billeted or employed. In the face of this, the behaviour of the troops seems little short of heroic.' NARA 740.0011 EW/4-2445

GARF 9401/2/95 pp.317-328 Beria to Stalin

In connection with the STAVKA's order 20 April No.11072 on changing the attitude of Red Army troops towards German prisoners and civilian population, a question arises concerning organisation of civilian affairs departments on the German territory occupied by our troops. These departments are to be organised within the offices of commanders of Fronts. As the Stavka has ordered the establishment of local German administrations, the military administrations of civilian affairs will have to exercise control over the operation of local German institutions and the implementation by them of the Soviet military command.

In this connection, I think it necessary in order to create a normal atmosphere in the rears of the operational Red Army on German territory. 1. To establish at the offices of the 1st Belorussian Front 1st Ukrainian Front and 2nd Belorussian Front, the position of deputy front commander on regulating civilian affairs and organise a corresponding administration on civilian affairs. [NB Chaos because none of this thought through in advance !!!!]

2. To mobilise the necessary number of Red Army officers and Soviet administrative, economic officials for working in the apparatus of military and civilian affairs.

3. To impose on the military administration of civilian affairs the responsibility for rendering assistance to the reps of the NKVD of the USSR at the Fronts in organising camps and prisons for keeping Germans (spies, saboteurs, terrorists, those who worked in punitive organizations, members of fascist organizations and others) who have been arrested by representatives of the NKVD of the USSR in the cause of clearing the rear areas of the Red Army in accordance with the order of the NKVD of the USSR of 18 April which you have approved.

For your information: on the territory of west Germany, the allies have established a position of special deputy of commander of Allied troops, Eisenhower, who is in charge of civilian affairs, Major General Lucius Clay, who until he was appointed to this position, was deputy chief of the bureau of mobilising military resources of the USA.

The Allies regulate the occupied German territory through the organ of military administration, which is headed by Clay and consists of 3,000 men who had been trained in special schools. They are officers and people with economic and administrative experience.

The Allies are widely using for controlling civilian affairs, the local German administration, police courts, municipal administrations, financial institutions etc. that act under the guidance and control of the officials of the military administration listed above.

Also in Eisenhower's staff, there is a political adviser on German affairs, an official from the State Department of the USA, Murphy. I request a decision. Beria

Order of State Committee of Defence GARF 9401/2/95 pp.317-328 Beria to Stalin

GARF 9401/2/96 pp.255-261

Königsberg up to 30 May, clearing rear areas. Estimated population of East Prussia 2.2 million in 1940. Population down to 193,000 registered by 30 May. In the regions of East Prussia that will become part of the Soviet Union, earlier there was 1.25 million. At the present time there are approximately 82,500 people of the German population. Insterburg, Tilsit, Gumbinnen, Stallupönen and Eidtkunen, the German population was moved to other areas and at the present time the German population is forbidden to enter. From 9-30 May operatives arrested 1,280 men of which

German.

GARF 9401/2/96 pp.255-261

16,000 prisoners died in Stutthof camp (Russians in German custody) from typhoid in six weeks. Prisoners ordered to eliminate all traces. Crematorium blown up. Burned down ten barrack blocks in which Jews were kept and performed a thorough cleaning. German army made to take part in executions of Red Army prisoners of war and Soviet civilians brought from Russia. Just before Soviet troops reached Königsberg.

To secure the successful implementation of Soviet military command measures on the regulation of German territory occupied by Red Army troops, the State Committee of Defence orders:

1. To establish with the offices of commanders of 1st Belorussian Front, 2nd Belorussian Front and 1st Ukrainian Fronts, the position of a deputy front commander in charge of civilian affairs.
2. To appoint the following deputy front commanders for the administration of civilian affairs: 1st Belorussian Front, State Security Commissar of the 2nd rank, Comrade Serov I.A.; 2nd Belorussian Front, State Security Commissar of the 3rd rank, Comrade Tsanova L.F.; 1st Ukrainian Front, Lieutenant General Comrade Meshik, P.Ya.
3. To establish that the deputy front commander is to:
 - a. exercise control over the local German administration including the sphere of securing public order and the fulfillment of all orders and tasks given by the Soviet military command given to these orders. The deputy commanders of fronts are to perform these functions through the commanders of units and Red Army military commandants as well as through their specially appointed representatives.
 - b. carries out the necessary work on discovering and removing on the German territory occupied by the Red Army of spies, saboteurs, terrorists... And other active enemy elements. For carrying out this work, a group of operatives of NKVD-NKGB of the USSR will be given to each deputy commander of the front and they can also use the operational troops of SMERSH organs.

For keeping the removed enemy element under guard, deputy commanders of the front for civilian administration can organise the necessary number of prisons and camps whose locations should be agreed with NKVD of the USSR.

To set forth that the deputy front commander is at the same time a representative of the NKVD of the USSR and is responsible to the NKVD of the USSR for the work on removing enemy elements.

GARF 9401/2/95 pp.323 Serov to Beria 25 April [26 April to Stalin]

Reporting about the operative measures that we have carried out on 1st Belorussian Front. On 25 April on the sector of 1st Polish Infantry Division, the ex-president of the Spanish Republic was liberated from Oranienburg concentration camp. Caballero said that he came to Paris from Spain in 1939. In 1940, when the Germans took the city, he escaped to the south of France. Then the Germans found him and organised his guarding by the police. In November 1940, the gestapo put him in jail where he stayed until 1941 and then was released under police supervision. In February 1943, Caballero was arrested again and was held in a Berlin prison until June 1943, after that he was taken to a concentration camp. Caballero was in an extremely emaciated state and he was put in the divisional field hospital. Caballero said that he would like to inform his family that he was alive. I request your instructions on Caballero.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.339

Osetrov of 1st Ukrainian Front to Beria 30 April.

In a place called Lide, three kiloemtres to the SE of the town of Ludenau, lives a councillor of the Japanese embassy in Berlin, Temutsa Shiamura, who addressed the command of the Red Army with the following request: 'I am asking you to protect myself, my property and protect all my officials. Please inform the Japanese embassy in Moscow of my whereabouts. If possible help me with moving to a new place. Return three vehicles that were taken by units of the Red Army.'

Together with Temutsa there is a Japanese draughtsman, one Bessarabian interpreter and four Germans, a secretary, a maid and a driver and his wife.

GARF 9401/2/96 pp.331 Decree of Czech government ejecting all Germans. 16 June Serov to Beria.

The kommandatur of the Front received information that on the border of Germany and Czechoslovakia that at Altenburg, to the south of Dresden, large groups of Germans are crossing the border. These Germans have been forced out of Czechoslovakia and there are numerous cases of suicides.

The local administrations in connection with this order announced to the Germans to collect their belongings within 15 minutes and leave for Germany. They allow them only to take five marks and no private belongings and foodstuffs. Every day up to 5,000 Germans arrive in Germany from Czechoslovakia, mostly women, old people and children. They are ruined and have no future. Some of them commit suicide by cutting their wrists. For example, the 8 June, the commandant of Altenburg, recorded seventy-one corpses with cut wrists.

'Les premiers contacts avec les troupes Russes ont laissé une pénible impression aux prisonniers rapatriés. 'their rings, wallets, watches, provisions, footwear were stolen. Officiers et soldats en état d'ivresse, se livrant à ce pillage'. [Report 2e Bureau 21.4.45, SHAT 7 P 128]

Officers and soldiers of fighting units 'irreproachable'. Repatriated via Odessa.

population shows German character trait: 'soumission au vainqueur quel qu'il soit, inconscience devant la responsabilités encourues par l'Allemagne.' SHAT 8 P 22 liaison 12th Army Group

'La plus grande terreur de la population allemande est celle d'avoir à accepter un jour, l'occupation Française ou Belge. La seule présence de quelques Militaires Français appartenant aux trois services de Liaison aux Armées, suffit à faire naître l'effroi.'

SHAT 8 P 22 liaison 12th Army Group

One middle-aged couple returned to their apartment to find a Red Army officer rifling through their

belongings. Sign language 'pantomimisch' . Officer demands details who lives there. Point to framed photographs. Explain their son Heinz was reported missing at Stalingrad. 'General Paulus Moskau', was the only comment in reply. But he produced a gold necklace from his pocket, it was the one which he just stolen from them, and handed it back.

1st Ukrainian Front

On 9 June this year, chief of staff of first department of 951 artillery regiment of 391 Rifle Division sent a group of soldiers to the village of Martinsburg with an order to get some fuel from the local Germans and to bring it back. The Red Army soldiers who did not find any fuel in the village, went into a house of the local resident, Tarta Gottwald, and took a gramophone and records and after that intended to go back to their headquarters. When they left the building, they were met by a group of Germans numbering twenty-five men who tried to prevent them from taking away the gramophone. The fight started between the Red Army soldiers and the Germans. Red Army soldier Seryi wounded two Germans with his pistol. As a result of this fight, soldier Frolov was also wounded. When they returned to the regiment the above-mentioned soldiers said to the commanders that they were shot at by the Germans and as a result soldier Frolov was wounded. The commander of 951 artillery regt Hero of the Soviet Union Major Kaplan, took about seventy men and two field guns and went to the site of the incident. When they reached the village of Martinsburg, Major Kaplan gathered all the male population, and without any investigation, subjected fifteen Germans to corporal punishment and shot two of them in front of the villagers. The investigation revealed that Major Kaplan was misinformed by the Red Army soldiers, who told him about an armed assault and concealed the fact of looting and using weapons against the Germans. GARF 9401/2/97 pp.71-2 Glina to Beria

9 August. Beria to Stalin Molotov and Mikoyan. NKVD of the USSR reports that repatriates and soldiers returning from Germany are carrying with them a lot of clothes and household items. When they approach the frontier and learn that our customs guards are confiscating these goods, they start to sell them in the Polish villages near the frontier for next to nothing. The markets in these towns are full of such goods. Many shops buying them are open in Peremyshl. A lot of items remain with black market merchants in the Polish towns near the frontier. GARF 9401/2/97 p. 323

GARF 9401/2/96 pp. 343-344 16 June 1945

Beria to Stalin on number of Polish citizens kept in prisons of the NKVD of the USSR. 25,047 of which:

soldiers and officers of Armiya Kraiova, active participants of terrorist and sabotage groups, persons who kept conspirators' apartments and Gestapo agents who were removed from Polish territory in 1944, 2,338 men.

Soldiers of AK whose participation is proved by materials seized on Polish territory in 1944, 5,973.

People arrested during clearing the rear areas of the Red Army in 1945, as agents of German intelligence organs, participants of different enemy organizations and bandit groups, 15,162.

Poles arrested for active enemy activities who became German citizens, Volksdeutsch, 1,574.

Out of the total number, in camps for the interned are kept 12,280 and in screening camps, 9,185, in the Gulag camps and in the prisons of the NKVD, 2,285, in front camps and prisons 1,297. Also in the camps of the NKVD and the USSR there are also prisoner of war Poles who were with the German army 32,731, and in work battalions now in the Ukraine, the Poles who were mobilised from Silesia, who claim that they are Polish, 7,202.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.8-10 Beria to Stalin about appointing NKVD representatives with the troops. 22 June 1945

Since January 45, the 1st 2nd and 3rd Belorussian Front and 1st and 4th Ukrainian Fronts, there are representatives of the NKVD of the USSR who are acting in accordance with your orders and have at their disposal operatives of NKVD, NKGB, SMERSH and NKVD troops. In connection with the new deployment of Red Army troops in the West, NKVD of the USSR thinks it expedient to reorganise the above mentioned structure of representatives of NKVD of the USSR, namely:

1. To keep the organs headed by the representative of the NKVD of the USSR on German territory at Comrade Zhukov's group of troops. To order Comrade Serov to fulfil the same duties as he was performing before at Comrade Zhukov's group of troops, along with fulfilling duties imposed on him by the decree No.1326-301 of 6 June this year from the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.
2. a. To appoint the following representatives of the NKVD of the USSR: at Comrade Konev's Group of Troops, on the territory of Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia: Lieutenant General Comrade Meshik, now the representative of the NKVD of the the USSR at the 1st Ukrainian Front.
b. At Comrade Rokossovsky's Group of Troops on Polish territory, to order Comrade Selivanovsky to combine the duties of representing NKVD of the USSR and councillor at the Polish Ministry of Public Security.
c. At Comrade Tolbukhin's Group of Troops in Roumania and Bulgaria, Major General Comrade Pavlov, who is now the chief of NKVD Troops guarding the rear areas of the 3rd Ukrainian Front.
3. To give the following duties to representatives of the NKVD of the USSR: a. controlling and guiding the work on clearing the territories occupied by the Red Army from the agents of German intelligence and counter intelligence organs, search and removal of German fascist underground groups and the so-called Werwolf gps left by the enemy, and the search and arresting of war criminals which is being carried out by the SMERSH organs of the People's Committee of Defence, by NKGB and NKVD.
b. To guide NKVD troops on these territories.
c. To guide the operation of screening commissions of the repatriated Soviet citizens at the Front camps.
d. To guide the work of the Front departments dealing with prisoners of war and to assist with the

transfer of prisoners to the USSR.

4. To leave the following number of NKVD troops at the disposal of the above mentioned NKVD representatives. To Comrade Serov on German territory, ten regiments; to Comrade Meshik, on the territory of Austria, H and Cz, six regiments; to Comrade Selivanovsky on Polish territory, fifteen regiments; to Comrade Pavlov on the territory of Roumania and Bulgaria four regiments.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.23-26 Kobulov to Beria. Statements by German Generals on the publication of the defeat of Germany and the supreme power assumed by the powers of the Four Allied states and the agreements concerning the new occupation zones.

Field Marshal Paulus: 'They could have published all that much earlier. It's just the decisions made in the Crimea. What a disaster for the German people.'

Paulus's adjutant still hoping for conflicts between the allies.

Field Marshal Schörner: 'The conditions for the capitulation, the fact that the English have given new German territories to the Russians proves that England has lost its leading role in Europe. Only idiots could think that America was soon going to open a new front against Russia and England can't do it without America. We simply had to capitulate because there was nothing in this crazy idea of a split between the allies. If it was only about England it would be understandable, but for America, Europe is now of secondary importance, because it is now fighting with Japan. And without Russia, America will have many difficulties with Japan. At any rate, the policy of Russia at the present time is very very clever. America's victory over Japan will greatly profit Russia too.'

Emergency state commission on German damage to the USSR.

Comments of German Generals.

Major General Borman: 'Only Russians could publish such figures. The winners are now behaving even less sensibly than after the First World War.' Reference to Soviet scorched earth policy in 1941: After the Russians stripped their factories during the Wehrmacht advance. 'We had to restore the Russian economy and doing this we in fact destroyed our own industry.'

Artillery General Rolf Wutmann: 'Now we see again how Russia wants to enrich itself at our expense. In return for the handful of wooden houses that we destroyed during the war, it is now asking for twice Germany's pre-war national wealth.'

Lieutenant General Werner Rank: 'If we count all that we have built in the occupied Russian territories and how many railways and roads that we built and repaired, it is these devils who should be paying us.'
GARF 9401/2/99 pp.202-207 September 1945. Kobulov to Beria then to Stalin

NKVD operative group found in Berlin in one of the safes in one of the destroyed buildings of Hitler's Reichschancellery a document containing Borman's notes on the conversation that took place on 2 October 1940 in Hitler's apartment about the treatment of the Polish population. I attach a copy of this document.

On 2 October 1940 after lunch in the Führer's apartment, a conversation began that concerned the character of governing and the treatment of Poles. The conversation started with Reichsminister Dr. Franck, saying that the General-Government is very successful. The Jews in Warsaw and in other towns are already locked in ghettos and Krakow will soon be cleared of them. Reichsleiter von Schirach who was sitting on the other side of the Führer remarked that he has still got over 50,000 Jews in Vienna whom Dr. Franck should take. Dr. Franck said it was impossible. Gauleiter Koch pointed out that he still hasn't removed either Poles or Jews from the region of Zehanon. Hitler: 'The Poles were born just for heavy labour'. GARF 9401/2/100 p.484-490 7 November 45 Beria to Stalin etc

Volksdeutsch from Balkans.

Men 17-45 and women 18-30 rounded up for labour in Soviet mines. At the assembly points terrible scenes took place. 'When we marched to the railway station, we heard the bells of a Catholic church. For many, it was the last time they heard the sound of bells in their lives.' Forty per carriage. Sidings by day, move by night.

Polyan, Pavel Vestarbaitery: internirovannye nemtsy na sovetskikh stroikakh, Rodina No.9 1999

Clearing areas and internment for labour went on until early May 1945. Beria to Stalin (17 April) stated that by 15 April, 1945, 215,540 men were removed, of which 138,200 were Germans, 38,660 Poles and 27,880 citizens of the USSR, 3,200 Hungarians, 1,130 Slovaks, 390 Italians. Of them 148,540 actually brought to the USSR. Others were put to work in camps near the front line, 62,000 died during the operation or when travelling to the place of destination (5,000). The majority of these people were ordinary members of different fascist organizations. Also because of their state and age, it was impossible to use

most of them for work.

On 18 April 45 Order of NKVD of the USSR 0315 on the partial alteration of the order of NKVD of the USSR 0016 of 11 January 45 was signed by Stalin too. This order considerably reduced the number of categories to be cleared from the rear areas.

10 August. Measures on fighting criminal elements and scandalous behaviour, excesses. The Military Council of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany has stated in its order of 3 August 1945: In spite of numerous orders concerning the treatment of the local German population by soldiers and officers from the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany, robbing, physical violence and unsanctioned actions are still taking place. Checks have shown that these scandalous events are carried out mainly by former criminals drafted into the army, drunkards and hooligan elements and those who were in camps working for the Germans. Many such outrageous deeds are also performed by scoundrels who are traitors of the Motherland who are in the army by accident, those who have been in the ROA and ex-members of the Red Army who deserted. There are numerous cases of such deeds carried out by commandantur staff and by military people from the Red Army and the NKVD.

These cases of such deeds and unsanctioned behaviour are compromising us very badly in the eyes of German anti-fascists, particularly now that the war is over, and greatly assist fascist campaigns against the Red Army and the Soviet Government.

Commanders of military units have not taken sufficient measures to re-establish discipline in their units and eliminate unsanctioned absences, drinking and unlawful deeds against the local population. I therefore order:

1. To forbid with effect from 10 August 1945 all categories of military personnel from visiting zones occupied by our allies.
2. Unit commanders should establish a strict internal discipline according to service regulations. To establish a strict control to eliminate unsanctioned absences and unit commanders must constantly know the whereabouts of their subordinates.

To teach sergeants and corporals to conduct morning and evening checks of the troops according to regulations and to insist that these checks are constantly carried out.

Soldiers can take their leave in strict accordance with paras. 197-202 of the 1944 regulations governing service in Germany. To provide soldiers in all units with identification.

To minimise missions away from the unit, and when they are essential the documents of soldiers must be signed by unit commanders.

Personnel going on such trips should be thoroughly instructed on their behaviour and when they return their behaviour away from the unit should be checked.

To forbid any excursions and leave trips to Berlin for all categories of soldiers.

To define routes for vehicles and places for spending the night when necessary. Transport officers should have as well as their mission documents, a plan of the route signed by the unit commander and show it to the commandant of a village or town who will assign them a place to spend the night.

To pay special attention to different teams of people who drive cattle and livestock, cut hay and collect harvests as well as those who guard installations. Such teams should consist of vetted and reliable personnel and must be led by experienced officers who should have detailed instructions and their work should be permanently controlled and they should be replaced on a regular basis.

To forbid vehicles, carts and military personnel staying overnight in private accommodation without permission from their military commander. Officers who do it without permission should be arrested and charged.

To explain to all the population that none of the local people has the right to accommodate military people for the night without receiving permission from the military commandant.

3. To pay serious attention to the character of men sent on missions, especially the heads of missions, and instruct them carefully before they leave.
4. Regimental commanders should demand reports from their subordinates on the fulfillment of these orders on a monthly basis. To analyse any violations of these orders in the light of the guilt of commanders whose subordinates committed these violations and to take the strictest disciplinary measures against these commanders.
 - a. To institute courts of honour and the strong condemnation of officers who fail to take decisive measures on fighting violence and scandalous excesses. .
 - b. To mobilise all Party and Komsomol members in the struggle against excesses. To conduct meetings of Party delegates who are to discuss concrete measures on the fulfillment of this order.
5. This order must be immediately be announced to all officers who are to explain it to all NCOs and privates.
6. To inform me of the fulfillment of this order on the 15th of each month.

Signed Zimin, Major General and Lieutenant Col Volkov

RGVA 32925/1/297 pp.30-31

Rape. Anti-fascists.

24 June During the night of 22/23 June two unidentified men wearing Red Army uniforms, visited a burgermeister [presumably an anti-fascist appointed by Soviet military authorities] of the village of Ferbitz, demanding vodka and women. The burgermeister refused to satisfy their requests. They beat him, raped his wife and several other women from the same village and disappeared. RGVA 32925/1/125 p.331

2 May the commander of the 10th cordon 333rd Frontier Guards Regiment senior Lieutenant Astakhov made 4 soldiers go to the guardpost of the Reichsbank which was closed. Near the door was a soldier, Khilizitdinov, but nobody checked the vault, so when the soldier was close to the door, an unknown man opened the door and tried to shoot the Russian soldier. But Khilizitdinov noticed that he was only wounded. The man disappeared into the vault. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.309

5 May Red Army soldier found in an unknown place a can of industrial alcohol. On the same day at one o'clock, five of his comrades drank from it. That evening, the soldier gave part of the remains of the container to an officer, to the cook, and to the radio operator. The commander of the 9th cordon heard about this entertainment and he joined in too. Other officers, the commander of the 7th cordon senior Lieutenant and a senior sergeant joined in. On 6 May at 11 am the first soldier felt poisoned. He went to the hospital and died. At seven in the evening, another soldier and a senior sergeant also died in the hospital. All the others are in the hospital still alive.

RGVA 32925/1/130 p.315

9 May, victory day. There are many cases of robbery from citizens of the USSR returning home. Three unknown tankists robbed four Russian women and were not found. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.319

16 May two soldiers on a motorcycle. One Russian soldier wanting to take it from them opened fire. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.339

A pleasing number of small-fry Nazis have committed suicide after their districts had been overrun by the Allies.' NARA 740.0011 EW/5-1045

21 April Order to all troops to change their attitude towards the civilian population. From Stalin and Antonov. 20 April.

The STAVKA orders

1. All troops are required to change their attitudes towards Germans and prisoners of war as well as the civilian population and treat them better. The brutal treatment of Germans induces fear and provokes a stubborn resistance and prevents them from surrendering. The civilian population which is afraid of Russians taking revenge on them organises itself in bands and such a situation is not convenient for us. A more humane treatment of Germans will facilitate our fighting activities on enemy territory and undoubtedly will reduce the stubbornness of their defence.

2. In the regions of Germany situated to the west from the line Oder estuary to Furstenberg and then to Neisse a military administration will be established and German burgermeisters in towns will be appointed. Ordinary members of the National Socialist Party should not be arrested if they do not undermine the Red Army. Arrest only leaders who have not yet run away.

3. A better treatment of Germans should not cause a decrease in vigilance nor encourage fraternisation.

RGVA 32925/1/100 p.296

Atomic Bomb

The method of delivery was not now going to be a problem. In the late summer of 1944, the Soviet Union had impounded a B-29 Superfortress, forced into an emergency landing near Vladivostok, after a

bombing raid against Japanese targets in Mongolia. The crew was imprisoned in Tashkent for a year, while the aircraft was stripped down, rivet by rivet. Engineers supervised by Andrei Tupolev were then able to copy each piece. This meant that Stalin would soon have a strategic bomber, the Tu-4 clone of the Superfortress, capable of delivering nuclear warheads. Daily Telegraph, 27 January 2001

15 May Beria to Stalin

Serov reported on treasures removed from central bank of Berlin: 2,389 kilos of gold, of which 979 kgs. in gold ingots, and 1,410 kgs of gold coins from various countries; approximately 12 tons of silver coin; 140 million Serbian dinars; 12 million Italian lire; 887 million Greek drachma; over 140 million Roumanian liras; 56 million Bulgarian lers; 3 million Albanian francs; 37 million Belgian francs and large sums of other currencies. This treasure was handed over to the Front department of the State Bank. [GARF 9401/2/96 p. 15]

Looting. Barrels, piles of cloth, shoes, leather, wine, champagne, dresses, people are carrying it away. Germans. Some of them are extremely sociable and friendly. Others look the other way sulkily. [RGALI 1710/3/51 p.244]

2 May. The 5th Shock Army was criticised for insufficient patrols checking cellars and subways, where enemy soldiers lay hidden and where wounded soldiers from both sides still lay untended. The trouble was that most soldiers were off 'looking for trophies' or drinking or probably both. One looter, when challenged, claimed to be a member of the military council of the army, and 'made a scandal'. Some officers sent out their soldiers on looting parties, searching for wine and also womens' underclothes to send home to their wives. (In the circumstances, this sort of offering was undiplomatic. Wives back in the Soviet Union were furiously jealous. They suspected that all young German woman were trying to seduce their husbands). 'I will try to bring you a present from some Gretchen'. TsAMO 372/6570/76 and 372/6570/68

Artillery and tank troops were looters on a grand scale, mainly because they had the vehicles to carry their booty. Tank troops even drove up to storage depots and took whatever they wanted. Yet the supposed custodians of order were just as bad. A Lieutenant of the NKVD drove around in a commandeered motorcar, loading it with fabrics, one of the favourite commodities for the home market. [5th Shock Army, TsAMO 233/2374/92 p.28]

SMERSH was just as bad, if not worse. 'Every SMERSH guy thinks that he's totally in control', wrote Major Zaitsev, the chief of the political department of the 21st Army. 'They drink and loot'. 'Every SMERSH. . .', TsAMO 236/2675/336 p.44

Even though Communists were on their honour to oppose looting, only the most half-hearted attempts were made to stop it. Soldiers usually claimed that they were 'taking from the Germans what they themselves had looted'. TsAMO 236/2675/336 p.49

Diplomats cars also stolen. On 30 May this year, Kazakh soldiers of the Red Army were taken on an excursion round Berlin in two trucks. Alarmist rumours started to spread that quartermasters of a Mongolian army have arrived and that it will be stationed in Berlin. Oberburgermeister of the city is ordered to explain that these rumours are a provocation. We will keep you informed of developments. GARF 9401/2/96 pp200-208 To Beria from Serov

Simonov diary

Ortenberg and I had just left the "Emma" mine when we met a transport. On the first cart sat an old shabby transport-man in a soiled quilted jacket and old fur hat [ushanka]. He flicked the reins, urged the horse on, and his eyes were hidden behind absolutely glamorous German automobile glasses... Simonov Diary. Notebook No 8. RGALI 1814/4/7

French prisoners of war who worked on farms were generally treated well by the farmers, and often exceptionally well by the farmers' wives. Those in factories were treated badly.

VD soon known by British troops when they arrived in Berlin as 'Veronica Dankeschön'.

'On the route to Germany,' wrote Rzhevskaya of the four-million strong Soviet armies, 'rape had become acceptable.' She rightly ascribed this to the absence of punishment. 'As soon as the order was given, they managed to get it under control, so it was in the commander's power to stop it.' In some cases there was a definite desire for vengeance. 'I was like a beast who wanted revenge', admitted one Red Army soldier, but he almost certainly did not represent the majority. Most tried to excuse their behaviour as a response to all the terrible things done by the Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union, but even Red Army reports acknowledged that this was just a 'pretext'. 'On the route to Germany,' Rzhevskaya, 2001, p.273 'I was like a beast. . .', anonymous conversation.

Sometimes Soviet soldiers, gang-raping as a party, forced alcohol down their victim's throat first. Providing she did not choke, this crude anaesthetic apparently helped them survive the ordeal ahead. Some stories, such as the mass rape of classes of school girls, are almost certainly false. Most schools had been disbanded, if they had not already been evacuated. But other stories, of young women kidnapped and locked away for personal or collective use cannot be dismissed so easily. Some are said to have been taken to a basement in Schmargendorf. Others are said to have been locked up for the use of officers in police cells in the Fichtebunker air raid shelter just north of Tempelhof. In other air raid shelters where thousands of bombed-out Berlin women slept at night, such as the one in Sellerstrasse, soldiers smashed all the doors during the day so that they could gain easy entry later on.

Yet once again, Red Army soldiers could show an utterly confusing mixture of drunken brutality and kindness. Women with very young children were often spared. An alcohol-fuelled lust could suddenly turn to sentimentality as they realized their lack of home life during nearly four hard years of war. Many wanted to come back to German homes as friends having first arrived as rapists.

When one Red Army soldier began to attack a young woman in the entrance of an air raid shelter, her

friend ran out into the street, grabbed the first Soviet officer she saw by the arm, and dragged him back to help. The young lieutenant grabbed the offender by the throat with one hand, and pushed him back against the wall while drawing his pistol with the other. He shot him through the head at point blank range, which must have splattered the young woman as well as himself with brains and blood. [Dietmar Arnold]

GARF 9401/2/95 p.366-70 Lieutenant General Krivenko to Stalin 5 May

In accordance with your order we report the plan of removing prisoners of war from the front which we have compiled. The total number of prisoners of war left at the fronts by 1 May total 410,000, from those who were received by NKVD departments from military authorities.

It is planned to transport 330,000 men, that is 145 special trains [i.e. nearly 3,000 per train]. 80,000 prisoners of war will remain, mainly the ill and the weak. It is planned to start loading prisoners on 6 May and finish by 12 June. Each front:

3rd Belorussian Front and Königsberg Group 103,000 prisoners of war , to be transported 82,500 men. Start loading 8 May. Finish loading 26 May.

2nd Belorussian Front 22,000 prisoners of war, to be transported 20,000, start of loading 8 May, finish loading 18 May.

1st Belorussian Front, 38,000 prisoners of war (excluding those taken at Berlin), to be transported 35,000, start loading 8 May, finish loading 21 May.

1st Ukrainian Front, 37,000 prisoners of war, to be transported 35,500, start of loading 6 May, end of loading 27 May.

2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Front 198,000 prisoners of war; to be transported, 162,000, start loading 6 May, finish 12 June.

All 330,000 will be sent to NKVD camps to be used for labour within the sphere of Narkomats whose list is attached.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.374 Beria to Stalin 5 May

Colonel General Apollonov, Lieutenant General Gorbatyuk, and Lieutenant General Tutushkin sent to East Prussia to secure the removal of spies, saboteurs and other enemy elements, and establish the necessary order in the towns and ports of East Prussia. Comrade Apollonov will have four hundred operatives and nine NKVD regiments. Comrade Zelenin, the SMERSH representative of the 3rd Belorussian Front is ordered to render Comrade Apollonov the necessary assistance in carrying out this work. You will be kept informed. For your information, during the Red Army's advance on the territory of East Prussia, NKVD representatives at the Fronts removed from January until April this year over 50,000 enemy elements.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.395-99 Beria to Stalin.

Serov's report on rendering assistance to the local bodies of administration in Berlin. 11 May

Along with preparatory measures carried out by Com Mikoyan on organising the regular provision of food supplies for the population of Berlin, a session was convened on 10 May of the newly appointed burgermeisters. Zhukov announces rations for the different groups of population. 'All fifteen burgermeisters thanked Marshal Stalin for his attention towards the population of Berlin.'

Burgermeister of Tiergarten said 'we are conscious of the guilt of the German Army, and we cannot make up for it. We also know that the Russian soldiers remember the harm done to their families, but we nevertheless ask them not to take from Germans their personal belongings and not to rape women. At the same time there are numerous cases when the Nazis who stayed in Berlin also robbed the local population and stole foodstuffs from the depots. To stop such behaviour by the Nazis, we have mobilised them all in special groups to clear the streets of the city and build bridges to prevent them looting and robbing.'

Burgermeister of Steglitz: 'All German people know that they are guilty towards the Russian people, but the Russians have to understand that the German people are not to blame for the behaviour of Hitler's clique who have driven the country to such a state. We thank the Red Army and Marshal Stalin for liberating us from the fascists.'

Among those who spoke was also the deputy burgermeister of the central district of Berlin. Before Berlin was destroyed in this district there were only German ministries. During his speech, the deputy burgermeister made a provocative statement. He said that Communists with red armbands and pistols in their hands are walking around his district robbing and looting, organised a GPU with Communists and are arresting people. When Comrade Zhukov asked him to name several people arrested or shot by this GPU, the deputy burgermeister did not produce any facts and stated that local people had told him about it.

Comrade Berzarin then gave the burgermeisters passes for the city, the burgermeister of this district, repeatedly apologised to Comrade Berzarin for the incorrect speech of his deputy during the session.

The city electric power station is functioning (by 10 May) Trams will be running again in a few days. Watersystem back in a number of districts.

Local population and other German towns in zone of 1st Belorussian Front fulfil the orders of the military command 'with unquestioning obedience'.

GARF 9401/2/95 p.395-99 Beria to Stalin.

Serov's report on rendering assistance to the local bodies of administration in Berlin. 11 May

Large numbers of foreign prisoners of war, who are taking private property of German population, putting them on carts and heading for the west. Measures are being taken to remove stolen property from them by NKVD control posts at all Berlin entry and exit points.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.28-31 Serov to Beria 22 June 1945

NKVD operative groups have arrested about 600 participants of Werwolf underground groups organised by the Fascist Party and a number of weapons and ammo taken from arms caches, five heavy machine guns, 12 hand machine guns, 135 rifles, 320 grenades, 68 Panzerfausts and a lot of ammunition. It was established by our agents and by investigation that in the beginning of February this year, leaders of the Fascist party, Borman and Goebbels.

Chapter 28 - The Man on the White Horse

'The fall of Berlin', wrote General Alexei Ignatiev on 24 April, 'represents not just the destruction of Hitler's regime but the beginning of the crushing of German militarism'. Like many Russians, he also saw this this imminent victory as unfinished business from 1918 when the infant Communist government was humiliated at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. ['The fall of Berlin', RGALI 1403/1/84 p.1.]

German Civilians

'They lost sons and fathers in far-off Russia, then they lost faith in Germany and now they are losing everything, their houses, people close to them and their homeland.' Inozemtsev, p.201

The Red Army refused to recognise the International Red Cross in Berlin. Letter to Antonov 27 May NA RG334/Entry309/Box2

Zhukov invited to Eisenhower headquarters at Frankfurt for luncheon on June 10. Marshal Zhukov stated that he would bring a party of about ten officers. Zhukov presents Eisenhower with Order of Victory. Berzarin's death. 23 June convey condolences. NA RG334/Entry309/Box2 Antonov correspondence

Press Accreditation

25 May 'There are already Soviet correspondents at SHAEF and there is no indication that the Russians are not already getting out of our zone all the information they want and are prepared to publish. Throughout the Allied campaign in the West the Soviet press has not averaged thirty lines a day from the correspondents with Allied forces. Conclude any appeal to reciprocity would be 'pigeonholed'. Only effective way would be to remove accreditation from Soviet journalists and broadcast why. 'So long as Berlin is under Red Army control the Soviet government obviously has decided that the story of what is happening there should be told in the manner which it prefers.' NA RG334/Entry309/Box 6 War Correspondents

Head of Press Bureau of Soviet Foreign Ministry summoned the representatives of Reuters and Associated Press and 'stated that the Soviet authorities did not consider the time right for correspondents to visit Berlin.' The authorities in this case, were of course the NKVD. [Deane to Eisenhower 12 May] NA RG334/Entry309/Box 6

Passions aroused. In one row in the Foreign Ministry, 'several correspondents including the Communist

London Daily Worker, threatened to close their Moscow bureause unless better treatment was given'. Foreign Ministry wanted correspondents sent from Moscow, presumably because they had to submit their copy to Soviet censorship. NA RG334/Entry309/Box 6

Eisenhower to Reade 8 May. Correspondents welcomed, even though entering Berlin illegally. 'No restrictions being placed in their way'. [And yet no reply to cables asking for position]. 'Position become untenable'. 8 May Eisenhower wanting to send 'Warcos Berlinwards'. Stonewalled by Soviet authorities. NA RG334/Entry309/Box 6

Lists of important Russians and File on Emigrees

NA RG260 A2 B1 C3 Box 363 OMGUS Stack 390 41/24/1-2 Boxes 176

Soviet emigres report 20 Jul 1948, Berlin, by John Scott.

'More than 500,000 displaced persons, refugees and deserters from areas within the Soviet frontiers of today are at present living in Western Europe.' 'Unanimous in their hostility to Stalin and the Soviet power.'

'In 1945 the Americans repatriated hundreds of the most active anti Bolshevists among the Russians to the Soviet authorities. Lately individuals were turned over to the Russians by force at the request of the Soviet authorities.'

'Thousands of deserters and refugees are still hiding out among the German population unregistered because they fear forced repatriation should they declare their identity.'

Registered in Western Zone of Germany:

21,581 Estonians

73,489 Latvians

43,974 Lithuanians

86,046 Ukrainians

20,153 Nansen pasport holders

8,504 Citizens of the USSR [presumably low because of fear of repatriation]*

273,406 Poles

17,868 Rumanians

*I was struck by the number of "Poles" who speak Russian among themselves'.

Similar pattern of Russian concealment in British zone.

Brigadier Todd privately admitted that the Russian Repatriation Commission claims of 120,000 of what they call Soviet citizens presently in the British zone is not far wrong. Fear of forced repatriation did not begin to diminish until 1948, with the growing conflict between the former Allies.

Vladimir Fedorovich Petrovzki, the son of a peasant family in the Urals, and later an engineer who witnessed the forced collectivisation in Kazakhstan, leading to famine and hundreds of thousands of deaths. After an unsuccessful attempt to escape to Rumania was sent to work in the Gulag on the White Sea Canal as part of a five year sentence. He joined the Red Army, fought at Stalingrad and ended up in Berlin as a highly decorated officer, hating the Nazis as much as Stalin, whom he described as 'that crawling snake. . . that bloody hangman'. Almost as soon as the Germans were defeated, he deserted. Now wrote under the pen-name Sadik-Vogulov. He described in his book a description of the Red Army entering Germany 'its organised looting, its raping, desertions, impersonations of officers etc'. He blamed the suffering and impoverishment thus caused to the German population on 'the low standard of living to which the Soviets were accustomed and their consequent demoralization by contact with the higher standard of living in Germany. [p.11]

Sabyk-Vogulov: In a certain hospital the assistant commander went to the house of some Germans he knew and told them that there was going to be an inspection and that if they cared to save their 13 year old daughter from rape they could hide her in his apartment. 'The parents did this and were worried the next day when the girl did not reappear. They complained to me, we went to look for her and what did we find? We found that the assistant commander had raped the girl himself and was keeping her in the cellar of his house.' I [full colonel] reported the matter to the criminal investigation division which, as usual, did nothing.'

Tens of thousands of Red Army soldiers in eastern Germany, 'out of contact with their units, living off the land, trying to collect as many watches and other articles of value to take home with them, in the meantime drinking, raping and raising general hell'. Sabyk-Vogulov described 'incidents of gang-rape in which their Army commanders either participated or laughingly approved of'. His father, sister and brother perished in the Gulag.

Russians quickly discovered in their first contacts with the Germans and later with the Western Allies that whereas Ukrainians and Balts, even Georgians were somehow expected to be anti-Soviet, Russians were expected to be pro-Soviet. They soon realized] 'that if they wanted to avoid forced repatriation they had better avoid being "Russians".'

General Glasenapp 'a former Gestapo agent, now connected with American intelligence and the leader of the SAF (Union of St.Andrew's Flag). But Glasenapp 'virtually ostracised' by groups in the Munich area).

Members of Vlasov units and other former Soviet citizens who had served under Wehrmacht orders, faced repatriation of war criminals as agreed at Yalta, and later reconfirmed at the Foreign Ministers' conference in Moscow in April 1947, or as deserters as defined under the Clay-Sokolovsky agreement. Also former

prisoners of war and forced labourers sent to Germany. In rural areas of Bavaria, there are large numbers of Russians working on farms. Some of these have married German girls and have no intention of declaring themselves as Russians.

Slaughter of German boys. Irony that in Moscow, young women could not find a husband, while in Germany young women cohabited with Russian deserters.

Composition of Russian emigrants

Ostovtzi slave workers 37%

Former Red Army prisoners of war 25%

Voluntary emigrants from USSR during German occupation 25%

Old emigrants 13%

Ukrainians mainly peasants and intellectuals, not workers. AZODNR The anti-Communist Center of the Liberation Movement of the Peoples of Russia. Mostly ex-Vlassov and therefore likely to be accused of war crimes so very careful. Founded Munich 24 April 1948

Detailed history of Vlasov Army included in appendix

Many Red Army deserters jumped ship just before their regiments were sent back to Soviet Union. Many officers deserted wanting to stay with their new found German mistresses. Estimates of up to 50,000 deserters crossing into British and US zones. Clay claimed that his agreement with Sokolovsky only extended to handing over Russian deserters who had been arrested. Senior deserters went to the British 'because they can take them to Britain'.

Intelligence networks built up by SSU with agents paid in cigarettes

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Captured German Generals in USSR

To the Chief of the State Committee for Defence, 18 May. Paulus's private comments probably picked up by microphone: 'I am surprised that it was Keitel who signed this act of unconditional surrender. Keitel, this unjustifiable war criminal. Thank God, it's all finished. But there's one thing I want to say. If I was asked to sign a capitulation in Berlin I would probably do it, but I would have hidden my pride very deeply. Why all this theatre? I don't understand Keitel.' Colonel van Oven, vice-president of the BDO: 'English and Americans are soldiers by nature, although the spirit of militarism does not dominate them. And I can very well imagine that all this procedure with signatures, the whole story of capitulation was abhorrent to them. And Zhukov said after the end of the ceremony: "Now the German delegation can go." I do not think that this sounded at all nice.'

General von Seydlitz: 'Thank God, it's all finished at last. Field Marshal Jodl and others went to Rheims because they wanted to capitulate only to the western countries. These idiots really believed that they could play the allies off against each other. At any rate, it was good that this shameful document was signed

by Keitel and the others. During this they put their signature to their own evil deeds in front of the whole world and their own people above all. Soon the Allies will organise the economic life of Germany, sooner than we think. I think that it will be the Russians who will set the agenda in Berlin.'

General Lattman: 'Everything was ruined with as much disgrace as the people deserved. These people will never be able to create a heroic drama out of National Socialism. It's the past. Many generals have covered themselves with disgrace. People who told others that after a defeat in battle, the troop leader can only seek death, are surrendering as if nothing has happened. It is a shame that such a brilliant army as the German one has been so illused. This hurts the old soldier, a soldier in body and soul, right in the heart. And there was a time when we followed this gang with a faith in our souls.' GARF 9401/2/96 p. 139-142. 18 May.

The NKVD of the USSR thinks it necessary to close down the National Committee for a Free Germany and the Union of Free Officers which were set up in 1943 with captured Germans. After the defeat of Germany, the need for such an organisation has disappeared and now they are doing practically nothing. NKVD of the USSR also thinks it necessary that all captured German generals and officers remove their badges of rank and medals. GARF 9401/2/99 pp.399 Beria to Stalin 30 September 45

Movement Control in Occupied Germany

To commander 127 Frontier Guards Regiment (on the river Oder) from Zimin and Volkov . 22 May. To take all captured property from anyone who came to Germany specially to loot. To examine the luggage of all Germans returning to their place of permanent residence, looking for weapons, valuables belonging to the state and other property which has to be confiscated, and only leave them their personal necessities which they can physically carry. Sorting confiscated property. A. The property which should go through the Army Department, vehicles will be sent from time to time to take away the objects accumulated. B. The property which is in bad condition can be kept at the cordon. Horses should be taken in accordance with the order from NKVD units located near Kustrin. In Kustrin and Frankfurt people on trains should be checked too. RGVA 32925/1/100 p.372

'Repatriees who are vagabonding all over the place.' Alekseev, commander 105th Frontier Guards Regiment RGVA 32925/1/100 p.385

A German without documents was taken to his apartment, and they found there the uniform of a German colonel, so they arrested him. 27 May. It was discovered during interrogation that he was the commander of anti-aircraft defence and chemical defence. His name was Johannes Muller. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.57

White Russian emigré. 29 May. When checking a man who said that he was a citizen of the USSR who had been taken to Germany in 1941, they noticed that he spoke fluent Russian and German. They examined his documents carefully and found a note in one corner of the photograph showing that it had been taken in Berlin in 1940. The stranger was arrested. It was established during interrogation that the prisoner was a White emigré, that he had been in Denikin's army and Wrangel in 1919 and 1920 and

fled together with Wrangel's troops. After that he lived in Bulgaria and France, and since 1940 in Berlin.
RGVA 32925/1/121 p.60

Repatriation of Vlasov Troops

NKVD of the USSR reports that according to information received from General Golikov, the number of people in the Vlasov corps, to be handed over by the English is 40,000 people, of which 9,000 are members of families and 1,000 are German instructors. After they are handed over by the English, the Vlasov soldiers will be sent to three camps: Graz, Bruck and Leoben, all situated to the south of Vienna. All Vlasov soldiers and their families will be sent to the following camps: Kizelovsky, a screening camp No 0302 to work on coal, 12,000 men; Prokop'ievsky, a screening camp No. 0315, in Kusbas, 12,000; Kemerovo, screening camp No. 0314, Kusbas, 7,000; Prokop'ievsky, camp No. 525, 9,000; all German instructors and officers from the Vlasov corps will be sent to Prokop'ievsky NKVD camp. The camps where Vlasov's soldiers will be kept will be guarded by a strengthened guard of NKVD convoy troops. The screening of Vlasov soldiers in the camps will be carried out by operative departments of the camps and SMERSH departments of the camps. The reception of Vlasov soldiers will be headed by Lieutenant General of NKVD troops, Gorbatyuk. For guarding and conveying Vlassov soldiers, NKVD troops used for guarding the rear areas of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts will be used. GARF 9401/2/96 p.169 20 May Beria to Stalin and Molotov

Diplomats in Berlin

NKVD of the USSR reports that 304 officials of foreign embassies and missions in Berlin as well as their families were brought from Berlin to Moscow, 157 of them were Japanese, Swedish 10, Afghans 6, Swiss 47, Danish 30, Italians 26, Greeks 21, Norwegians 3, Hungarians 4. Also among the people who came to Moscow were 14 Germans, German citizens who worked in the department which looked after British and American interests in the Swiss Legation. GARF 9401/2/96 pp.173-4 Beria to Stalin and Molotov 26 May

Population of Berlin

Population registered 3,100,000 2 June. [800,000 returned after capture, therefore implication that 2,300,000 in Berlin in early May.] [GARF 9401/2/96 pp200-208 To Beria from Serov

16 May. It became known to the chief of the 2nd cordon that a group of senior German army officers is hiding in one of the houses in Nieder Schönhausen. Five men were sent there commanded by a sergeant who reached this house and began searching it for Germans. At first they had no success, then the group leader was checking a room in the corner of the basement and by accident pressed a button and a little door opened which led to a cellar. Six men were found in civilian clothes. They were escorted to the cordon. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.46

9 June. Gestapo documents on depots with explosives. 'Surprise mines' in canned beef and tins of erstaz honey. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.74

12 June. Germans said to have put on Red Army uniforms to rob local population. RGVA 32925/1/121 p. 78

16 June. Underground female organisation called 'Freikorps Adolf Hitler'. The organisation is based in Lichtenberg. One member already arrested. 22 June. Women's terrorist organisation. A month before the Red Army's arrival in Berlin, Werwolf had organised a special school, which trained terrorists. It was based near Spandau and about 300 women between the ages of 25 to 35 studied there. Officially it was a school of forestry. The programme included the study of all types of weapons, shooting, using explosives, Panzerfausts, and creeping up on individual enemy soldiers. The majority of these women are now in Berlin and are preparing sabotage and terrorist acts. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.81RGVA 32925/1/121 p.88

Search dog Rex on 16 June has arrested a prominent fascist. On 16 June 1945, the chief of the 4th Sector sent a search group to arrest a fascist who was hiding in an apartment in one of the buildings in Rikestrasse. The group included the search dog Rex [PEKC]. They approached the building without being seen, and performed a thorough search. The lady who owned the house tried to persuade them that her husband had gone to work in Weissensee, a suburb of Berlin. Knowing that the criminal should be at home, the group checked the premises thoroughly, but could not find him. Then the soldier who commanded the group decided to use the search dog. He brought the dog to the bed and made him smell items of his clothing lying on the bed. The dog began seeking a trace. Rex entered the kitchen and began scratching at the floor. The head of the group performed another thorough examination and found an entrance to the basement, a narrow corridor with a concrete floor. One and a half metres below the surface, the exit from which was in some gooseberry and raspberry bushes. The dog went through the corridor and puled his handler after him. They found the criminal in the bushes and he was taken to the headquarters for screening and he proved to be a leader of a large fascist party organisation in Berlin.

Prikaz No.0016 of NKVD of the USSR of 11 January 1945 on measures for clearing the rear areas of the Red Army from enemy elements. Resolution of the State Defence Committee 7467ss of 3 February 1945 [copy of original] to strictly punish persons found committing terrorist and sabotage acts by ruthlessly killing them on the site of their deed. As far as other civilians are concerned on the territory of the 1st 2nd and 3rd Belorussian Fronts and 1st Ukrainian Front it was decided to carry out the mobilisation of all Germans from 17 to 50 years of age capable of physical labour and able to carry weapons. To form labour battalions of 750 to 1,200 men each to work primarily in the Ukraine and Belorussia.' On 22 February 1945, Beria first spoke to Stalin about mobilising German civilians for labour in the Soviet Union. They got hold of these people as a result of clearing the rear areas of the operational Fronts. The labour battalions did not include 'enemy soldiers, traitors of the Motherland, Vlasov men etc.' (Two waves, both Balkan Germans and Reichsdeutsch came to 267,000 men.)

East Prussia

Beria to Stalin 5 May. Colonel General Apollonov, Lieutenant General Gorbatyuk, and Lieutenant General Tutushkin sent to East Prussia to secure the removal of spies, saboteurs and other enemy elements, and establish the necessary order in the towns and ports of East Prussia. Comrade Apollonov will have four hundred operatives and nine NKVD regiments. Comrade Zelenin, the SMERSH representative of the 3rd Belorussian Front is ordered to render Comrade Apollonov the necessary assistance in carrying out this work. You will be kept informed. For your information, during the Red Army's advance on the territory of East Prussia, NKVD representatives at the Fronts removed from January until April this year over 50,000 enemy elements. Beria to Stalin, 5 May, 1945 GARF 9401/2/95

NKVD Troops in Berlin

On 20 January 45 the 1st Belorussian Front NKVD headquarters controlled 38th, 127th, 157th, 333rd Frontier Guards Regiments, 107 Special Group and 108 Special Communications Company. By 1 July 1945 it consisted of 16th, 38th, 83rd, 87th, 92nd, 105th, 127th, 157th, 219th, 331st and 333rd Frontier Guards Regiments, 107 Special Group and 108 Special Communications Company.

Werwolf organization discovered and liquidated in Saxony. 84 men arrested including the leader, Johannes Lorenz, Captain German army. Pretended to be a Communist and was appointed Burgermeister of two villages. Sabotaged, lines of communications, vehicles, and weapons of the Red Army and stole weapons from Red Army soldiers. Included many HJ. GARF 9401/2/99 pp.214-217 to Beria from Serov September 45

Looting NKVD 4 June. Zimin's deputy caught stealing nine tons of fuel from an emergency reserve of fuel, which was presumably sold on the black market. Just reprimanded. RGVA 32925/1/297 p.25

22 May. We know from the chief of the 17th Sector [of Berlin] that criminal elements are arming teenagers with Panzerfausts. Four German teenagers with Panzerfausts were arrested in this sector. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.52

24 May. Several Werwolf depots of foodstuff and ammunition have been found. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.54

Several cases of desertion of Red Army soldiers in order to rob passengers at railway stations in Berlin. 28 June RGVA 32925/1/121 p.93

30 June. Poles living in Berlin put on Red Army uniforms, check documents and strip people of their valuables. RGVA 32925/1/121 p.95

A Gestapo agent, a woman, Anneliese Gebser, was arrested on 11 June in the village of Lanz. She had contact with three Soviet girls one of whom worked at a farm and the two others are hiding in the village. A group was sent to find them. [More likely that a woman who had probably been quite friendly with the Russian girl labourers was then accused of being a Gestapo agent intent on recruiting them for spying activities. Shows degree of suspicion about Ostarbeiterinnen]. RGVA 32925/1/125 p.309

17 May two officers of Red Army shot at in Teltow with a Panzerfaust. Russians wounded. German taken to Russian post but ran away. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.336

19 May According to the military commandant of Teltow, Major Sudonin, it is known that in the district of Teltow there was a group of terrorists nine strong who are Germans and the leader of the group is Russian, Romashin, the son of a church-warden. This group has the task of committing terrorist acts against officers of the Red Army. On 18 May the military commandant of Teltow captured 4 members of the group and the leader. They took one sub machine gun, three rifles, fifteen handguns and five Panzerfausts. Five bandits disappeared. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.341

2 July. The fascist organisation to carry out terrorist acts use 13 to 15 year old children armed with guns and rifles. On 31 May, at 14.00 the operational group of the district of Schöneberg closed the restaurant Filial, captured a thirteen year old boy, Heinz Gited, a member of the Hitler Youth, who had been ordered to kill three officers of the Red Army. He had two guns and two boxes of cartridges. On 1 June in the district of Templehof, six young people were captured, members of the same organisation. They had four guns, one rifle and a carbine. RGVA 32925/1/130 p.372

3 June. The operational group in the district of Neukolln has found that Werwolf was planning to sabotage the railway and to attack soldiers and officers of the Red Army. The leader of the organisation, Greve, was captured at Malhidetstrasse 75. A storeroom with explosives and also military uniforms was found.

RGVA 32925/1/130 p.374

1 June Schöneburg Red Army soldiers captured a woman, S.R., a member of Werwolf. She had two rifles and two guns and two knives.

RGVA 32925/1/130 p.376

5 June Werwolf in Britz. 4 June. 'On Fritzreiterallee at house number 116, a member of the Werwolf was captured. He in turn was forced to denounce three other Werwolf members in the town of Lukau 130 kilometres south east of Berlin. SMERSH.

RGVA 32925/1/130 p.378

Werwolf denunciations coming almost every day. In Tegel 14 people were arrested and a store of military equipment found.

Berliners call Soviet troops 'Uhri-uhri' or 'Frau komm'.

Stalin's phrase: Hitlers come and go but the German people remain' used on posters.

RGVA 32925/1/116 1st Belorussian Front. 38th Frontier Guards Regiment

German prisoners of war

In accordance with your order we report the plan of removing prisoners of war from the front which we have compiled. The total number of prisoners of war left at the fronts by 1 May total 410,000, from those who were received by NKVD departments from military authorities.

It is planned to transport 330,000 men, that is 145 special trains [i.e. nearly 3,000 per train]. 80,000 prisoners of war will remain, mainly the ill and the weak. It is planned to start loading prisoners on 6 May and finish by 12 June. Each front:

3rd Belorussian Front and Königsberg Group 103,000 prisoners of war, to be transported 82,500 men. Start loading 8 May. Finish loading 26 May.

2nd Belorussian Front 22,000 prisoners of war, to be transported 20,000, start of loading 8 May, finish loading 18 May.

1st Belorussian Front, 38,000 prisoners of war (excluding those taken at Berlin), to be transported 35,000, start loading 8 May, finish loading 21 May.

1st Ukrainian Front, 37,000 prisoners of war, to be transported 35,500, start of loading 6 May, end of loading 27 May.

2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Front 198,000 prisoners of war; to be transported, 162,000, start loading 6 May, finish 12 June.

All 330,000 will be sent to NKVD camps to be used for labour within the sphere of Narkomats whose list is attached. GARF 9401/2/95 p.366-70 Lieutenant General Krivenko to Stalin 5 May

Beria to Stalin about appointing NKVD representatives with the troops. 22 June 1945

Since January 45, the 1st 2nd and 3rd Belorussian Front and 1st and 4th Ukrainian Fronts, there are representatives of the NKVD of the USSR who are acting in accordance with your orders and have at their disposal operatives of NKVD, NKGB, SMERSH and NKVD troops. In connection with the new deployment of Red Army troops in the West, NKVD of the USSR thinks it expedient to reorganise the above mentioned structure of representatives of NKVD of the USSR, namely:

1. To keep the organs headed by the representative of the NKVD of the USSR on German territory at Comrade Zhukov's group of troops. To order Comrade Serov to fulfil the same duties as he was performing before at Comrade Zhukov's group of troops, along with fulfilling duties imposed on him by the decree No.1326-301 of 6 June this year from the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.
2. a. To appoint the following representatives of the NKVD of the USSR: at Comrade Konev's Group of Troops, on the territory of Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia: Lieutenant General Comrade Meshik, now the representative of the NKVD of the the USSR at the 1st Ukrainian Front.

b. At Comrade Rokossovsky's Group of Troops on Polish territory, to order Comrade Selivanovsky to combine the duties of representing NKVD of the USSR and councillor at the Polish Ministry of Public Security.

c. At Comrade Tolbukhin's Group of Troops in Roumania and Bulgaria, Major General Comrade Pavlov, who is now the chief of NKVD Troops guarding the rear areas of the 3rd Ukrainian Front.
3. To give the following duties to representatives of the NKVD of the USSR: a. controlling and guiding the work on clearing the territories occupied by the Red Army from the agents of German intelligence and counter intelligence organs, search and removal of German fascist underground groups and the so-called Werwolf gps left by the enemy, and the search and arresting of war criminals which is being carried out by the SMERSH organs of the People's Committee of Defence, by NKGB and NKVD.

b. To guide NKVD troops on these territories.

c. To guide the operation of screening commissions of the repatriated Soviet citizens at the Front camps.

d. To guide the work of the Front departments dealing with prisoners of war and to assist with the transfer of prisoners to the USSR.
4. To leave the following number of NKVD troops at the disposal of the above mentioned NKVD representatives. To Comrade Serov on German territory, ten regiments; to Comrade Meshik, on the territory of Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, six regiments; to Comrade Selivanovsky on Polish territory, fifteen regiments; to Comrade Pavlov on the territory of Roumania and Bulgaria four regiments. GARF 9401/2/97 pp.8-10

'Germans said in November 1941 that with a good pair of binoculars you could see the streets of Moscow. Who exactly said that? We cannot tell. Maybe he is now awaiting trial in Nuremberg. Perhaps these general's binoculars whose lenses sparkled from between a general's suede gloves, the binoculars through which the lucky general could see the Kremlin, perhaps they are kept in some museum. Perhaps

in Nuremberg. With what admiration would members of the Hitler Youth admire these binoculars displayed in their glass case, these binoculars through which the streets of Moscow had been seen.

We cannot trace the fate either of these binoculars or of the General. History has to do it for us. Probably it has already seen pieces of glass broken in the blue snow, with rictus fingers gripped around the binoculars. Perhaps it has seen a column of prisoners of war in which the general who had been so envied by the boys of the Hitler Youth, was walking, his coat trailing on the ground.

German fascists worshipped the sayings which seemed to them of such historic significance. Their style was deliberate. It was Hitler who set the tone. Hitler who so constantly burst into magic spells and prophecies and the phrase about the binoculars through which the streets of Moscow had been seen was not uttered by accident. It contained the very essence of fascism - an ignorant scorn of other peoples' history. This phrase probably struck them as historic, but in fact it was just stupid and insulting. In reality, he never saw the streets of Moscow. It was just an optical illusion. But when Russian soldiers are racing up the staircases of the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate hears the song of the Volga, this is reality.

What a fragile object a pair of binoculars is! How fragile a fine-sounding phrase can be! The streets of Moscow remained beyond reach. Now they are shining with festive lights. [Yuri Karlovich Olesha, author of *Zavist'*, [A sense of Envy] ms. notes, RGALI 358/2/458]

Counter Intelligence Corps report on dismissal of Zhukov by Krushchev.

Zhukov accused of 'adventurism' and of fostering 'a personality cult'.

Since Zhukov became Minister of Defense, the power and the prestige of the military had increased and it is quite obvious that the resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was mainly inspired by fear that the armed forces might grow too independent, even perhaps to the point of disassociating themselves from the Party and its leaders. . . . There is no doubt that Khrushchev eliminated Zhukov in order to consolidate his preeminence'. NA 319/ 256A/ XA544063

Right up to his death by suicide, Goering refused to believe that the invasion of the the Soviet Union had been a mistake. 'The British should have made peace in 1940', he said in private talks with Lord Jowett, the head of the British war crimes commission. Germany could then have concentrated everything on Russia. He, like other Nazi leaders and most senior officers of the Wehrmacht, were still convinced that they had done the right thing. [Alexander Saunderson, Jowett's aide, videotaped interview]

Goering never spoke against Hitler. Airey Neave brought a lampshade made with human skin to Nuremberg as a reminder to people of what the SS had been capable.

Committee for Stateless Russian emigres. Vlasov members trying to claim that they were emigres. NA 319/22/XE135034.

Russians used the Japanese war to ask the Americans to 'make available to the Red Army 10 each of all types of available anti-tank and anti-personnel mines for experimental purposes'. Slavin to Reade 26

June 1945, NARA RG334/Entry309/Box3

14 June Deane and Slavin. Minutes: 'General Deane reviewed all the questions to which we have as not yet received answers, asking General Slavin if he had anything further to add on any of these matters. General Slavin, with many words, indicated that he had nothing to say.' NA RG334/Entry309/Box 16 Meetings with the Soviets

30 June 1934. The German bourgeoisie failed in this way (to oppose Hitler). The German middle and professional classes did not have an idea of what a Rechtsstaat was. This why 12 days after the Night of the Long Lives, Hitler was able to say I am the Obersterrichter, the chief judge and nobody objected. Maizière conversation.

Conclusions. Burgomeister of Lebe: 'We should have followed Bismarck's dictum. We should never have gone to war with Russia.' No mention of it being morally wrong. just a wrong decision. Standard formulae. 'It's boring to discuss politics with Germans,' Agranenko observed. [Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17 pp. 40]

Klemperer on Mein Kampf. 'This book was available, and yet this man was made leader and has been allowed to lead for eleven years now! The German upper class can never be forgiven for that.' [Klemperer, 10 February 1944, p. 361]

VLASOV Stalin's big prize. To Alexandrov from Shikin 14 May 1945

Chief of political department of 1st Ukrainian Front Guards Major General Yashechkin reported to GlavPURKKA that on 12 May 1945, near the town of Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, tankists of 25th Tank Corps captured traitor of the Motherland General Vlasov. The circumstances were as follows: One of the lieutenant colonels of the 25th Tank Corps, was approached by a man from the Vlasov army with the rank of captain who stated, pointing at a car moving alone on the road towards the west, that General Vlasov was in the car. A pursuit was organised immediately and tankists from 25th Tank Corps caught the traitor.

The following items were found with Vlassov: an American passport in his name, his Party card which he had preserved and a copy of his order to his troops to stop fighting, lay down their weapons and surrender to the Red Army. According to Vlassov's testimony, he intended to reach the territory occupied by our allies.

At the present time Vlasov is under arrest at the headquarters of 13th Army. RGASPI 17/125/310

On 13 and 14 May, up to 20,000 Vlasov soldiers and officers lay down their weapons and surrendered in the Pilsen region. NKVD after anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalists

SMERSH arrests. Of the eighty Red Army Generals captured by the Wehrmacht, only thirty-seven survived until released by the Red Army. Eleven of them were then arrested by SMERSH and sentenced by

tribunals of NKVD forces. These eleven were presumably on a list compiled in advance. It is not clear whether Vlasov and his colleagues were included on this particular list, even though they represented the highest priority of all.

Zhukov's movements. On 19 May flew from Tempelhof at 1000 to Moscow. At 1530 landed Moscow Central Airfield. 19 May to 26 May in Moscow, work in the Stavka.

27 May to 10 June 1st Belorussian Front. 27 May at 0030, left on a train from Belorusski railways station to 1st Belorussian Front. 28 May in Brest took a plane and reached Berlin in 2 hours and fifteen minutes.

30 May appointed representative of Soviet higher command at the Control Council on the Occupation of Germany

German guilt

Germans betrayed in their automatic use of Goebbels propaganda cliches how deeply their thinking had been influenced, what one very perceptive US Army report described as 'residual Nazism'. They would, for example instinctively refer to allied bombing raids as 'Terrorangriffe' (Goebbels' phrase) and not use the ordinary neutral term of 'Luftangriffe'. Many would talk with self-pity of Germany's suffering, especially from bombing. They fell uneasily, and one would assume resentfully, silent when reminded that it was the Luftwaffe which had invented the mass destruction of cities as a shock tactic. Apparently they also let slip other revealing Nazi verbal formulae on racial identity, such as 'die gesunde Volksempfindung' 'the healthy sense of a People's identity'. ['residual nazism', SHAEF Psychological Warfare Division report passed Murphy to State Department, NA 740.0011 EW/4-2445]

Interrogators and political advisers in contact with civilians were ceaselessly amazed at the average German's evasion of responsibility for what had happened. They had been forced to be Nazis. Only the leadership was guilty for anything that might have happened. Ordinary Germans were not. They had been 'belogen und betrogen' - 'deceived and betrayed'. German generals implied that they too had been victims of Nazism, for if Hitler had not interfered so disastrously in the way that they ran the war, then they would never have been defeated.

The interrogation of German generals, continually talking about the obligations of their honour, produced the most astonishing distortions of logic. SHAEF's joint intelligence committee attributed it to 'a perverted moral sense'. 'These Generals', states its report based on over three hundred interviews, 'approve of every act which "succeeds". Success is right. What does not succeed is Wrong. It was, for example, wrong to persecute the Jews before the war since that set the Anglo-Americans against Germany. It would have been right to postpone the anti-Jewish campaign and begin it after Germany had won the war. It was wrong to bomb England in 1940. If they had refrained, Great Britain, so they believe, would have joined Hitler in the war against Russia. It was wrong to treat Russian and Polish [prisoners of war] like cattle since now they will treat Germans in the same way. It was wrong to declare war against the USA and Russia because they were together stronger than Germany. These are not isolated statements by pro-Nazi generals. They represent the prevalent thoughts among nearly all these men. That it is morally wrong to exterminate a race or massacre prisoners hardly ever occurs to them. The only horror they feel for German crimes is that they themselves may, by some monstrous injustice, be considered by the Allies to be implicated.' [a perverted moral. . .', 7 May, NARA 740.0011 EW/5-1045]

Not content with exculpating themselves, both civilians and generals then tried to persuade their interrogators of the rightness of Nazi Germany's view of the world. Civilians could not understand why the United States ever declared war on Germany, and when told that in fact it was Germany which had declared war on the United States, they were incredulous. But the over-riding point on which they all lectured their conquerors was that the United States and Britain should immediately ally themselves with Germany against

the common danger of 'Bolschewismus'. The fact that it was Nazi Germany's onslaught against the Soviet Union in 1941 which had brought Communism to all of central and south east Europe - something which all the revolutions between 1917 and 1921 had completely failed to do - remained a concept too hard for them to grasp. Rather as the minority Bolsheviks had managed to exploit ruthlessly the Russian conditioning to autocracy, so the Nazis had seized upon their own country's fatal tendency to confuse cause and effect. Neither words nor images will ever be able to convey the extent and the depths of the suffering which followed.

'After the war of 1812, our soldiers who had seen life in France, were comparing it with the backward life in Tsarist Russia. At that time the influence of French life was a progressive one because it gave Russian people the opportunity to see the cultural backwardness of Russia, Tsarist oppression and so forth. From this, the Decembrists made their conclusions on the necessity of fighting Tsarist autocracy. Nowadays, it is a very different thing. Perhaps some landowner's estate in East Prussia is richer than some collective farm. From this, a man who is politically backward draws a conclusion in favour of a feudal economy against the socialist variety. This kind of influence is regressive. This is why a merciless fight is necessary against these attitudes.' TsAMO 372/6570/78 pp30-32

10 July Lieutenant Kungurov Ivan Fedorovich in 157 Frontier Guards Regiment, chief of staff 1st Battalion arrested for having slandered leaders of the Party and Soviet Government. In March 1945, he praised life in Germany and slandered the Soviet press. A military tribunal of NKVD Troops guarding the rear areas of 1st Belorussian Front sentenced Kungurov to 8 years of imprisonment in labour camps and the confiscation of all his property and loss of civil rights for 11 years. RGVA 32925/1/297 p.28

Sentenced by military tribunals all kinds of offence.

1944 543,745 of which 99,425 men condemned for counter-revolutionary crimes,

88,432 for military crimes (Article 193) and 355,888 for general criminal offences.

1945 357,007 men of which 135,056 counter-rev crimes, 69,059 military crimes and general crimes 152,892.

so counter-rev crimes in 1945 37.8% and in 1944 only 18.3%

Also condemned by special tribunals of the NKVD of the USSR (no figures). And military board of the Supreme Court of the the USSR.

8,504 Citizens of the USSR [presumably low because of fear of repat]

273,406 Poles

17,868 Rumanians

[I was struck by the number of "Poles" who speak Russian among themselves].

'Thousands of deserters and refugees are still hiding out among the German population un registered because they fear forced repatriation should they declare their identity.' NA RG260 A2 B1 C3 Box 363
OMGUS

Stack 390 41/24/1-2 Lists of important Russians and File on Emigrees Boxes 176

General A.I. Laskin. In August 1941, a Colonel at the time, was arrested by German soldiers when he and two of his companions were trying to break out of the Uman encirclement. Interrogated by a German NCO. A few hours later Laskin and his comrades managed to escape. They were aware of the ways of the Special Departments and they kept quiet about this brief imprisonment. SMERSH found out about it in February 1943, and Laskin, who by that time was a Lieutenant General, chief of the operations department of the headquarters of the Don Front, and had several medals, including foreign ones, was arrested. Following nine years of investigation, he was accused in 1952 of betrayal of the Motherland, espionage and voluntarily surrendering and sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment. [VOV, iv, Note 64 p.193]

If any young German officer before the battle for Berlin had seen himself - as an earlier generation had in 1914 - playing the part of the Marquis in Rilke's 'Cornet', riding out against eastern invaders, he could not have been left with any such romantic illusions by the end. The nationalist crusade against bolshevism had achieved the very opposite of its intention. This has been something of a recurring disaster in German history.

9 May Stalin to Truman

'the combat friendship of our peoples' 'The peoples of the Soviet Union greatly value the participation of the friendly American people in this liberative war'. NA RG218 JCS (Leahy files) Box 7

Churchill Truman

9 June PM to President. 'Berlin is so far completely Sovietized. . . 'Would it not be better to refuse to withdraw on the main European front until a settlement has been reached about Austria? Surely at the very least the whole agreement about zones should be carried out at the same time?'. NA RG218 JCS (Leahy files) Box 16

7 June 'I have never been more anxious than I am now about the state of Europe'. PM to President NA RG218 JCS (Leahy files) Box 16

1 June 'although I am in the midst of a hotly contested election'

'It would be open to the Russians in a very short time to advance if they chose to the waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic. Surely it is vital now to come to an understanding with Russia, or see where we are with her, before we weaken our armies mortally or retire to the zones of occupation. This can only be done by personal meeting.' Churchill wanted to meet 15 June, not 15 July. 'This issue of a settlement with Russia before our strength has gone seems to me to dwarf all others.'

Truman reply No 39 14 May 'From the present point of view it is impossible to make a conjecture as to what the Soviets may do when Germany is under the small forces of occupation and the great part of such armies as we can maintain are fighting in the Orient against Japan.'

Churchill to Truman 11 May: 'I fear terrible things have happened during the Russian advance through Germany to the Elbe. NA RG218 JCS (Leahy files) Box 16

IRON CURTAIN

Churchill first used the phrase 'iron curtain' in his No.44 of 12 May to Truman. 'An iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind. There seems little doubt that the whole of the regions east of the line Lubeck-Trieste-Corfu will soon be completely in their hands. 'This enormous Muscovite advance into the centre of Europe' NA RG218 Stack 190 2/15/3 CCS/JCS UD47, Box 15 File 94

Churchill to Truman 12 May 'profoundly concerned'. 'I learn that half the American air force has already begun to move to the Pacific Theatre. . . meanwhile what is to happen about Russia?' 'deep anxiety because of their misinterpretation of the Yalta decisions, their attitude towards Poland, their overwhelming influence in the Balkans'.

'The Allies ought not to retreat from their present positions to the occupational line until we are satisfied about Poland.' NA RG218 Stack 190 2/15/3 CCS/JCS UD47, Box 15 File 98

Another unattractive part of the celebrations was Stalin's speech at the great banquet in the Kremlin. Speaking to a mass of generals and other Soviet dignitaries, he praised the 'little people' who had been the 'little screws and bolts' of the gigantic war machine. It was a thoroughly revealing metaphor. Yet even Marshal Zhukov was being treated with contempt behind his back, although he had little idea until much later. 'little people', quoted Werth, *Russia at War*, p.1002

'That summer was the best period in Zhukov's life,' observed the wife of his artillery commander, Marshal Kazakov. The Soviet commanders lived in grand style. There were many parties and receptions. Zhukov enjoyed dancing, singing and playing the accordion. His greatest pleasure was to accompany Lydia Ruslanova, the famous folk singer and wife of his cavalry commander, General Kryukov. 'Zhukov was a totally different person, happy, smiling and bursting with energy', Kazakova recalled. But Kryukov and Ruslanova were already marked by association. They had been present at a dinner in Zhukov's dacha soon after the victory parade. The first toast that evening had not been to Comrade Stalin.

Serov, now promoted to Colonel General, was present at all these parties. He went shooting with Zhukov, as did other senior commanders, 'but he was not a real friend, he imposed his friendship. He may well have betrayed him later', Kazakova observed. Markus Wolf, who knew Serov well, described him as an 'absolutely military man: he had nothing civilian about him.' Yet he got on only superficially well with soldiers. Serov was a man of the Stalin era, 'very firm in his demeanour'. But like many involved in the snake-pit of Kremlin politics, he fell and rose again. 'That summer', Kazakova, conversation, 6.11.99 'absolutely military man. . .', Wolf, conversation, 14 July 2001 'Ein absolut Militär: er hatte nichts ziviles an sich'. 'Er war in seinem Auftreten sehr bestimmt'.

Serov certainly tried to offer Zhukov money from the Reichsbank for his 'expenses', but Zhukov was fortunately wary. It is impossible to know whether this was done on Stalin's or Beria's instructions in order to compromise him, or was simply part of the enrichissez-vous mentality of the conquerors. In any case, the real plot against Zhukov was being hatched by Abakumov, the chief of SMERSH, who loathed Serov. Abakumov was the chief beneficiary of Stalin's fear of Beria, whose place he would soon take.

In the middle of June, just two weeks before the victory parade, Zhukov was asked about the death of Hitler at a press conference in Berlin. He was forced to admit to the world that 'we have not yet found an identified body.' Serov, who stood close by, must have known perfectly well that SMERSH had it. His friendship with Zhukov certainly had its limits. Around 10 July, Stalin again rang Zhukov to ask him where the body was. To play with Zhukov in this way clearly gave Stalin great pleasure. Zhukov, when he finally discovered the truth twenty years later from Rzhnevskaya, still found it hard to accept that Stalin should have done such a thing. 'I was very close to Stalin', he insisted. 'Stalin saved me. It was Beria and Abakumov who wanted to do away with me.' Abakumov may have been the driving force, but Stalin knew exactly what was going on and approved. 'we have not yet found. . .', 'Zeitung in der Zeitung', *Freie Welt*, July 1975, BA-MA Msg2/3626 'Eine identifizierte Leiche haben wir bisher nicht gefunden.' Stalin and Hitler's corpse, Rzhnevskaya, 2000, p.292 and 301

Abakumov arrived in Germany in November 1945, and without telling Zhukov, arrested several of his officers. Zhukov ordered him to release them immediately and to return to Moscow. Abakumov then began again by arresting junior officers. He forced confessions from them to implicate their seniors, in some cases by torture. In April 1946, he arrested Marshal Novikov, the chief of Soviet aviation. Novikov's confession to Stalin, almost certainly dictated by Abakumov, stated: 'I think it is necessary in this statement to tell of my connection with Zhukov, about our relations and politically harmful conversations together which we conducted during the war and which continued until recently.' He warned of Zhukov's 'exceptional ambition'. 'Zhukov tries very cleverly and subtly to diminish the leading role of the Verkhovnyi in the war. At the same time he openly boasts about his role as a great military commander. He even states that it was he

who worked out the schemes of the main military operations.' Abakumov also sought to revenge himself on his rival, Serov. 'I also want to inform you', Novikov was forced to write, 'that Serov was even closer to Zhukov than I. He also fawns on him and flatters him. . . . During the whole period of my stay in Germany, Serov helped me in the acquisition of material goods.' Novikov confession, 30 April, 1946, Voennye Arkhivy Russii, No.1. 1993 p.175

In May 1946, Stalin removed Beria from the ministry of state security and gave it to Abakumov. In June, on the basis of further confessions extracted from Novikov and others tortured by Abakumov and his men, Zhukov was accused of plotting a military coup. Abakumov had even managed to force General Telegin, one of Zhukov's closest colleagues in Germany, to make a statement against him. The denunciation was made at a meeting of the Supreme Military Council. Most generals were evasive. Only Marshal Rybalko, the former tank army commander, defended him bravely. Zhukov spoke last. He firmly dismissed the charges as fabrications. Stalin, after a long silence, told him that he would have to leave Moscow for a time.

Zhukov was appointed commander of the Odessa military district, a spectacular demotion. In August, Stalin was informed by his watchdog, Nikolai Bulganin, that Zhukov, had sent seven railway wagons full of looted furniture back from Germany. Zhukov's dacha was ransacked by some of Abakumov's thugs, keen on finding incriminating papers. In December 1947 he was expelled from the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The following month, his dacha and apartment were searched again. Abakumov reported to Stalin on 10 January, 1948. As well as 'twenty unique shotguns made by Golland and Golland [sic]', Abakumov's men listed enough precious cloth, furs, carpets, tapestries, porcelain, silver and paintings to fill a warehouse, not a dacha. Zhukov was also accused of looting 55 old master paintings. 'There is', said the report, 'a huge painting in Zhukov's bedroom which depicts two naked women'. But the real sting lay at the end. 'There is not a single Soviet book at the dacha although bookcases are full of books in beautiful bindings with gold letters. These books are entirely in German.' 'twenty unique shotguns. . .', To Stalin from Abakumov 10 January 1948, Voennye Arkhivy Russii No.1.,1993 p.189

A month later, Abakumov went for Serov by arresting his officers and extracting denunciations for looting in Germany. Even allowing for Abakumov's normal margin of exaggeration, the NKVD and SMERSH scale of looting was huge. Zhukov was also attacked for having had a campaign wife even though Stalin had allowed the practice. 'I fully realise that my affair with her is my fault', Zhukov acknowledged, 'as well as the fact that she had lived with me for a long time'. But he vigorously denied that he had 'indulged in any vulgar deeds' in his office. Stalin apparently considered arresting Zhukov on the basis of accusations that he had criticised his commander in chief, but the reaction of senior generals in support of Zhukov appears to have given him second thoughts. Nevertheless, the purge of Red Army generals close to Zhukov continued until 1949 and Stalin did nothing to restrict Abakumov's activities. 'I fully realise. . .', 1 December 1948, Voennye Arkhivy Russii No.1.,1993

Zhukov suffered his first heart attack in December 1947 and was then posted as commander of the Ural military district. He was rapidly written out of the history of the Second World War. Authors did not dare mention his name until Stalin, in an apparently magnanimous gesture, insisted that Zhukov should not be completely overlooked. Abakumov also became too powerful for Stalin's liking. He was arrested for corruption in 1951. Corruption in his case consisted of establishing private brothels, presumably staffed by specially selected women prisoners given no choice in the matter. He also forced MGB officers to bring him expensive scents from abroad. Abakumov was executed in his cell in 1954 after the natural death of Stalin in March 1953 and the arrest and execution of Beria three months later.

Zhukov was finally brought back to a position of importance under Khrushchev. He became defence minister and played a leading role in the brutal crushing of the Hungarian uprising in 1956. A year later, at the height of his power and popularity, Khrushchev suddenly dismissed him. Zhukov was accused of 'Bonapartism'. His campaign to reduce once again the level of influence of political officers in the armed

forces had alarmed the Party. Zhukov's old rival, Marshal Konev, exploited the opportunity with a bitter denunciation.

Members of shtraf companies who finished the war unwounded - not having washed away their guilt with their blood - were sent to Gulag camps.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.23-26 Kobulov to Beria. Statements by German Generals on the publication of the defeat of Germany and the supreme power assumed by the powers of the Four Allied states and the agreements concerning the new occupation zones.

Field Marshal Paulus: 'They could have published all that much earlier. It's just the decisions made in the Crimea. What a disaster for the German people.'

Paulus's adjutant still hoping for conflicts between the allies.

Field Marshal Schörner: 'The conditions for the capitulation, the fact that the English have given new German territories to the Russians proves that England has lost its leading role in Europe. Only idiots could think that America was soon going to open a new front against Russia and England can't do it without America. We simply had to capitulate because there was nothing in this crazy idea of a split between the allies. If it was only about England it would be understandable, but for America, Europe is now of secondary importance, because it is now fighting with Japan. And without Russia, America will have many difficulties with Japan. At any rate, the policy of Russia at the present time is very very clever. America's victory over Japan will greatly profit Russia too.'

General Panzer Troops Saucken

'We always said in the past that the Versailles treaty should be eliminated. Now it has happened, only it wasn't us honest Germans who liquidated it, but blackmailers and extortionists. Versailles was a luxury compared to what we have got. I am only surprised that the declaration does not contain a paragraph stating that a German can only speak in the presence of an Englishman, an American or a Russian. Only they should not imagine that by this pressure they will manage to hold the Germans within their power.'

Lieutenant General Bamler: 'The French will be using Germany as a colony'.

Major General Betge: 'Now the Russians have 15 to 20 million slaves at their disposal. They can do what they want with us, but there will be revenge. The day will come when Germany will be stronger and then I would not like to be in their shoes. It is clear from the previous war. Germany was completely defeated and in twenty years it was already able to carry out a seven years war. Germany should be free.' Like Bourbons, forgotten nothing and learned nothing.

Lieutenant 'The worst is that the Allies have complete freedom of action over Germany.' 'Red Army soldiers not allowed to go home. This proves that the decisive struggle is still to come.' As to the German people one can expect a major shift towards leftist radicalism.'

Confusion. Major General Muller. 'I would have preferred it if Russia had occupied the whole of Germany, then Germany would not be so fragmented and there would be a possibility of its quicker revival on the basis of close cooperation with the Soviet Union.'

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.71-2 Glina to Beria

1st Ukrainian Front

On 9 June this year, chief of staff of first department of 951 artillery regiment of 391 Rifle Division sent a group of soldiers to the village of Martinsburg with an order to get some fuel from the local Germans and to bring it back. The Red Army soldiers who did not find any fuel in the village, went into a house of the local resident, Tarta Gottwald, and took a gramophone and records and after that intended to go back to their headquarters. When they left the building, they were met by a group of Germans numbering twenty-five men who tried to prevent them from taking away the gramophone. The fight started between the Red Army soldiers and the Germans. Red Army soldier Seryi wounded two Germans with his pistol. As a result of this fight, soldier Frolov was also wounded. When they returned to the regiment the above-mentioned soldiers said to the commanders that they were shot at by the Germans and as a result soldier Frolov was wounded. The commander of 951 artillery regt Hero of the Soviet Union Major Kaplan, took about seventy men and two field guns and went to the site of the incident. When they reached the village of Martinsburg, Major Kaplan gathered all the male population, and without any investigation, subjected fifteen Germans to corporal punishment and shot two of them in front of the villagers. The investigation revealed that Major Kaplan was misinformed by the Red Army soldiers, who told him about an armed assault and concealed the fact of looting and using weapons against the Germans.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.84-90 Krivenko and Kobulev to Beria June 1945

A report on the mood of captured Generals. Victory parade on Red Square. General von Seydlitz to Paulus: 'This was the biggest and most brilliant parade that Moscow has ever seen. All Marshals took part in it. This parade confirmed the official termination of war for the peoples of the Soviet Union.'

Schörner: 'Everything that is happening is just a meaningless sound. In the end, the same will happen as in the Baltic countries. These little people [anti-fascist Germans] think that artificially created anti-fascist

parties will be asked to do some work.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.99-109 30 June Beria to Stalin and Molotov

Werwolf

Interrogations of Keitel, Goering, Doenitz:

'When Comrade Zhukov visited Eisenhower's headquarters to present him with the medal of Victory, Colonel of State Security Korotkov, whom we had instructed, spoke to the chief of intelligence at Eisenhower's headquarters, Lieutenant General Strong, received permission to interrogate some German prisoners. Thus on 16 June, we sent a group of officers to Eisenhower's headquarters. The group is headed by Colonel of State Security Potashov, Colonel Smyslov from the intelligence department of the headquarters of the Front, Captain Bezyminski of Front headquarters, Colonel Fromkin from the intelligence department of the Navy and an interpreter, Major of State Security Frenkina. This group was given a letter signed by Comrade Malinin, Chief of Staff of the Front to Lieutenant General Smith, chief of Eisenhower's staff, which said that according to the agreement with General Strong, they had come to interrogate German prisoners. Colonel of State Security Comrade Potashov, was ordered to interrogate Keitel, Goering and others about the underground organisations created by the Germans, and to find out where their organisers are now. Also to find out agents sent to Soviet Union.

Colonel Potashov, who arrived in Frankfurt am Main was received by Lieutenant General Smith, who declared to him after a short conversation that Strong was not authorised such important questions and he had no right to give permission. Moscow often protests when some English or Americans crossed the border by accident. [Americans a lot of theatre]

The next day, Colonel Potashov with his group of officers met General Strong. Produced list of ten prisoners for interrogation. He asked whether Marshal Zhukov's headquarters would allow them to interrogate prisoners held by the Russians. Potashov asked to interrogate Ribbentrop taken by the Allies the day before. Strong refused saying Moscow must sort that out, since R not a prisoner of war. He could only give permission to interrogate military prisoners of war. US officers to be present at all times. German prisoners kept in Luxembourg and Mondorf 15 kms from Luxembourg in a holiday resort.

'None of these prisoners gave the impression of prisoners who are ready to answer for their crimes. They all look well, like holiday-makers, tanned. They all are dressed in full uniform with badges of rank and medals, including swastikas. In fact there is absolutely no isolation. They have every opportunity to discuss everything between themselves, and certainly discuss what evidence they are going to give. Comrade Potashov informed us that the bars on the windows are more decorative than a method of preventing the prisoners from escaping.' Potashov asked for the prisoners to be put in solitary during the period of interrogations. Russians only made notes to avoid having to hand over official protocols of interrogation.

Eight days in Luxembourg. Goering, Doenitz, Keitel, Jodl, Warlimont, Kesselring, Lindemann, Blaskovitz, General Bettiger (Keitel's General for liaison, former military attache in USA before the war), Vice-Admiral Jochner from Jodl's headquarters.

Soviets angry that Americans had warned the Germans in advance that they would be interrogated by Russian officers. Not the Lubyanka here.

Prisoners 'behaved independently and avoided truthful answers'. Willingly spoke on subjects of military history, but avoided giving any concrete answers on where military criminals were hiding in Germany. When asked about underground anti Soviet organisations created on the initiative of Hitler and people close to him. They answered that in Germany, military people 'They explained their devotion to Hitler and their participation in the war, on one hand they took their oath, and on the other Hitler managed to make them believe, not only the people, but also the senior military command that German was forced into the war by the Soviet Union which was preparing large scale military operations on the border. Goering, Keitel and Warlimont said that at first they had tried as long as they could to postpone the war with Russia as they had foreseen that Germany would be defeated in this war. Goering stated in the presence of American officers that he was constantly asking Hitler not to attack Russia before he had done away with England using his Luftwaffe, but Hitler would not listen to him. Keitel, Jodl and Goering were asked about the atmosphere in Hitler's headquarters before the Fall of Berlin, and Goering said that on 22 April, he left Berlin for Berchtesgaden on Hitler's order. He said that Hitler did not look normal during their last meeting. There was a constant trembling of the left hand and left leg and Goering attributed this to the previous year's assassination attempt. During the conversation with Hitler, Hitler had said that he would not leave Berlin and that he would die there. Goering said that when he reached Berchtesgaden, his chief of staff informed him that Hitler gave an order that his will was to take effect according to which Goering should become the head of the government. On the basis of this information, Goering sent Hitler an official request asking whether this information was true and whether he can now start negotiations concerning the termination of the war. In reply, he received a telegram from Hitler which informed him that he was stripped of his rank, dismissed from his position, expelled from the Party and should be executed as a traitor, but taking into account his great services to his country, Hitler thinks it possible to confine himself to the dismissal of Goering from his position within the state, saying that he is seriously ill. At the same time, according to Goering, Martin Borman gave the following orders to SS members: 'On the Führer's order, at the time of worst crisis in Berlin, Goering, his family and the people closest to him should be shot. As a result, Goering was arrested. Then Goering said that he was saved from being shot because the Luftwaffe people who happened to be near, had undertaken measures to liberate him from arrest. Then when Allied troops arrived, he was politely invited to take part in negotiations with military authorities and then taken to prison camp.

Field Marshal Keitel and Colonel General Jodl said that they maintained contact with Hitler's bunker by telephone and radio until the last moment. Then they learned from Doenitz about Hitler's suicide. They both state that they did all they could to take Hitler out of Berlin, but he was inexorable in his decision. They think that Hitler really had committed suicide and that he gave orders that his body should be destroyed to avoid it being exhibited in Berlin and in other German towns. During the interrogation, Goering spoke with a great hatred about Martin Borman, calling him Hitler's Mephisto. Goering said that Borman had a decisive influence on Hitler in all Hitler's actions. And he was the cause of Goering's disagreement with Hitler.

It was noted during the interrogation that Goering was reluctant to speak. When the American officers went off for a drink, Goering whispered to the interpreter that he would like to be interrogated without the representatives of the Allies as he had something important to tell. [Still trying to create a breach between the Russians and Western Allies]. However, Colonel Potashov did not have this opportunity. When they were asked about the Werwolf organization all the people interrogated said that they had heard on the radio about the organization of the Werwolf to continue the fight against the Allies, but they could not say anything about the results of this appeal. When Goering was asked where the fascist criminals are, he answered that even if he knew, he would not tell. Each of the interrogated men said that such organizations were not created, because this work was started too late. There was no material basis for such organizations and they could give no practical results. Doenitz stated that as soon as he had assumed the higher command, he had immediately issued an order forbidding underground organizations and any illegal activity against Allied soldiers and officers. Goering, Doenitz, Keitel and Jodl were also asked questions of military intelligence. Doenitz spoke of surface and U Boat fleet, on the weapons of the fleet

and all the inventions used by the German navy during the war. Keitel and Jodl gave evidence on implementing operational strategic plans at different stages of the war. Numbers mobilized, weapons etc. Goering himself had written a paper on the organization of the Luftwaffe. Comrade Potashov asked General Strong to see the intelligence protocols of the above listed prisoners of war. He was given only protocol of Goering, which contained general information less detailed than that published in the newspapers. Strong gave Potashov a letter for Colonel General Malinin, allowing him to interrogate the following persons: Colonel General Lehr, Field Marshal Schörner, General Lasch, General Panzertruppen Nering, Glazer and Balk. Serov writes that he thinks that this is all right, so that after that we could discuss the possibility of a more detailed interrogation of those prisoners in whom we are interested.

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.131-33 1st Ukrainian Front 2 July Terrorists

Beria from Glina

Several cases of mining the motorways and armed attacks on soldiers of the Red Army by armed groups hiding in the forests, have taken place recently in villages near the town of Kamentz. For example, near the village of Deutchbasarnitz, saboteurs have mined country roads several times. On 30 May, a group of six men travelling in a cart were blown up by a mine and they all died. [Mine could have been there since before the end of the war]. Sapper specialists who went to the site, had just been laid. They examined the road and found another thirteen mines which were immediately disarmed. On the same day near the village of Lukersdorf, another mine was found. 20 mines disarmed. To liquidate the terroristic sabotage group, an operations group with soldiers combed the forest. Using tracker dogs and mine-seekers.

At the end of April, this ten strong group consisted a terroristic act against the Red Army near Lebenau. They opened fire at a range of fifteen to twenty metres with rifles and pistols on a vehicle in which there were four officers of the Red Army. Three officers were killed and the fourth managed to escape. The corpses of the killed Soviet officers were stripped of weapons, documents and valuables. Corpses buried in a vegetable garden. Fearing responsibility, members of the group escaped in different directions and soon returned to their village and returned to working the land, where they were found out and arrested. During the preliminary interrogations all members of the group confessed that they were fully guilty of these criminal activities.'

GARF 9401/2/97 pp.159-217 Beria to Stalin translations of docs from German Foreign Ministry.

GARF 9401/2/97 p. 323 9 August. Beria to Stalin Molotov and Mikoyan. NKVD of the USSR reports that repatriates and soldiers returning from German are carrying with them a lot of clothes and household items. When they approach the frontier and learn that our customs guards are confiscating these goods, they start to sell them in the Polish villages near the frontier for next to nothing. The markets in these towns are full of such goods. Many shops buying them are open in Peremyshl. A lot of items remain with black market merchants in the Polish towns near the frontier.

GARF 9401/2/99 pp.202-207 September 1945. Kobulov to Beria then to Stalin

Emergency state commission on German damage to the USSR.

Comments of German Generals.

Major General Borman: 'Only Russians could publish such figures.'

The winners are now behaving even less sensibly than after the First World War.

After Russians stripped their factories. 'We had to restore the Russian economy and doing this we in fact destroyed our own industry.'

Artillery General Rolf Wutmann: 'Now we see again how Russia wants to enrich itself at our expense. In return for the handful of wooden houses that we destroyed during the war, it is now asking for twice Germany's pre-war national wealth.'

Lieutenant General Werner Rank: 'If we count all that we have built in the occupied Russian territories and how many railways and roads that we built and repaired, it is these devils who should be paying us.'

Counter-Admiral Gunter Horstman. 'All right. Perhaps we did bring back some pitiful machinery to Germany as scrap metal, but we brought new machines [to Russia] in the first place and also we developed the industry and it started to increase productivity and all that was left to the Russians. Now we are accused of accusing one or two things. We can't argue and the Russians are going to get a lot.'

Sending agricultural machinery to Russia.

Major General 'East Prussia and Silesia had more valuables than could be taken out of Russia in a hundred years.'

Colonel General Jaenecke: 'The volume and scale of the damage that was apparently calculated with great thoroughness shocked me. It's absolutely clear that all that was destroyed during the war including the destruction made by the Russians are put on Germany's account. I can't deny that this situation is fair, because it was Germany who attacked Russia and forced it to make necessary destruction of a strategic character. All material expenses can be paid back, but not the health and not the life of the people. I was greatly shocked by the facts of the liquidation of villages when innocent women and children were killed by German criminals. I sigh with relief when it turns out that it was the fault of the police and SS. This information constitutes a grave charge against Germany, and everyone who hears of it, worries if we will ever be able to pay Russia back.'

GARF 9401/2/99 pp.214-217 to Beria from Serov September 45

Werwolf organization discovered and liquidated in Saxony. 84 men arrested including the leader, Johannes Lorenz, Captain German army. Pretended to be a Communist and was appointed Burgermeister of two villages. Sabotaged, lines of communications, vehicles, and weapons of the Red Army and stole weapons from Red Army soldiers. Included many HJ.

Mental Hospital at Lobau, formerly under SS control, also used for killing sick foreign workers. Dr. Schulz rank of Sturmbannführer.

GARF 9401/2/99 pp.378-385 Beria to Stalin

Documents found in German Foreign Ministry in Berlin.

Secret protocol with Spain offering German weapons and Spain promised that if Anglo-American forces disembarked on Spanish soil, Spain would enter the war on the Axis side. Signed 12 February 1943.

GARF 9401/2/99 pp.399 Beria to Stalin 30 September 45

The NKVD of the USSR thinks it necessary to close down the National Committee for a Free Germany and the Union of Free Officers which were set up in 1943 with captured Germans. After the defeat of Germany, the need for such an organisation has disappeared and now they are doing practically nothing. NKVD of the USSR also thinks it necessary that all captured German generals and officers remove their badges of rank and medals.

GARF 9401/2/100 p.42-44 General Joachim Stiefer, atrocities in Ukraine a Feldkommandantur. September 42 to January 43

Geni Bomayer, woman, ex-director of human resources Frauenwerk. Arrested in Berlin thanks to secret service materials. Fascist ideals and auxiliary work. Thirteen departments.

Tatiana Nikolaevna Zhiromskaya, Soviet citizen, ex-member of Russian monarchist party, she was tried in 1938 for counter-revolutionary activities. The investigation revealed that she is descended from the Maslovs, a well-known Kharkov factory-owning family. Germans liberated her from prison when they took Kharkov, and she worked for them as a typist. She systematically delivered anti-Soviet speeches in front of the citizenry and slandered the leaders of the Party and the government. Fearing responsibility for the crime she had committed, she escaped with Kharkov city council to Berlin where until recently, she worked as a typist in the company AEG and continued to slander the Red Army and the Soviet authorities.

GARF 9401/2/100 p.484-490 7 November 45 Beria to Stalin etc

NKVD operative group found in Berlin in one of the safes in one of the destroyed buildings of Hitler's Reichschancellery a document containing Borman's notes on the conversation that took place on 2 October 1940 in Hitler's apartment about the treatment of the Polish population. I attach a copy of this document.

On 2 October 1940 after lunch in the Führer's apartment, a conversation began that concerned the character of governing and the treatment of Poles. The conversation started with Reichsminister Dr. Franck, saying that the General-Government is very successful. The Jews in Warsaw and in other towns are already locked in ghettos and Krakow will soon be cleared of them. Reichsleiter von Schirach who was sitting on the other side of the Führer remarked that he has still got over 50,000 Jews in Vienna whom Dr. Franck should take. Dr. Franck said it was impossible. Gauleiter Koch pointed out that he still hasn't removed either Poles or Jews from the region of Zehanun.

Hitler: 'The Poles were born just for heavy labour'.

GARF 9401/2/100 p.492 Beria to Stalin etc 20 November

At NKVD Camp No. 27 agents discovered that German soldiers and officers who were in the SS have their blood group tatoored on their left arm. SS soldier Luwig Hoffmann confirmed this information during interrogation and said that all soldiers and officers of the SS Division Wiking, had blood tests and it was tatoored on the inside of the left arm. As a result of checking this camp, 39 prisoners were revealed who had letters tatoored. They all confirmed that they were in SS troop or police units. Suxch checks are being performed in other camps too.

Prikaz NKVD of the USSR No.00461 of 10 May 1945.

Supplement to 00315 of 18 April 1945.

I order:

1. NKVD representatives at the Fronts, Commissar of State Security of the Second Rank, Comrade Serov, to organise camps and prisons in accordance with instructions given in appendices 1 and 2. To allow NKVD representatives at the Fronts to organise groups controlling camps and prisons of 3 to 7 men.

Sites for camps. 1st Belorussian Front: Lembertuv, Lodz, Poznan, Danzig, Krakow, Schneidermühl, Schwiebus, Lansberg, Furstenwalde, Werneuchen.

1st Ukrainian Front: Tost, Oppeln, Ravich.

2nd Belorussian: Graudenz jail, Gonnov jail, Stargard,

Prikaz of the NKVD of the USSR 001538 of 26 December 1945

East Prussia. December 1945. Dealing with waifs and strays. 'Children under 14 years of age to be sent to a Children's Labour Colony to organise work for them, and those teenagers who are not suspect to be handed over to their parents.' Chief of NKVD department on dealing with itinerant children should organise a children's labour colony in the town of Tapiau, with a limit of 600 people.