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SS-Unterscharführer Adolf Storms and the massacre of Hungarian-Jewish forced labourers in Deutsch Schützen

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ABSTRACT

Adolf Storms was not hard to find in the summer of 2008. He was listed in the German telephone book. The former SSUnterscharführer, who had been a member of the Waffen-SS Panzer Division Wiking, was accused, along with two other SS men, of having shot to death at least fifty-seven Hungarian-Jewish forced labourers on 29 March 1945 in Deutsch Schützen, a village close to the Austrian-Hungarian border. Immediately after that massacre, he allegedly executed a Jew – a man, name unknown, who could not walk any further – by shooting him from behind. Adolf Storms had lived in Duisburg under his true name since the late 1940s. In 2008, the author interviewed Storms and two Hitler Jugend (HJ) leaders who also took part in this crime, and three Jews who survived the massacre. In 2009, Storms was charged with murder and as an accessory to murder in Düsseldorf. In June 2010, shortly before the decision for the trial to commence, he died at the age of ninety-one. This case study scrutinizes the intersection of ideology, Nazi morality, motivation and situational factors in perpetrating massacres. It also analyses how the judicial system in Austria dealt with this crime.

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Introduction

Scholars have only recently begun to focus on Nazi killings carried out during the last months of World War II.¹ By then, mass killings in gas chambers or by the firing squads of the Einsatzgruppen and police regiments had ended; victims were now shot while being herded out of the camps or during the subsequent marches, starved to death or succumbed to epidemics. This form of killing during the regime's final phase produced a high mortality rate: approximately 250,000 victims, which was about thirty-five per cent of those still in the concentration camp system in January 1945.²

Moreover, the identity of the victims underwent a change. The targets of this annihilation were not only the (imagined) Jewish enemy, other foes of the 'Aryan race' (Sinti and Roma, Poles) or political adversaries. The victims were no longer selected according

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to ideological criteria 'but rather on the basis of deeds that they, in the opinion of broad segments of the German people, could have committed'.³ Amidst the chaos prevailing in the final months of the war and the enemies' approach, fear and fantasies of revenge spread like an epidemic through the German population⁴ and the real or imagined fear of escaped labour camp prisoners sank the already low threshold inhibiting people from committing murder.⁵

The orders for the evacuation of the camps originated not with local authorities, but the highest echelons of government.⁶ It mattered little whether the prisoners survived the trek or not. The murdering itself was not channelled and controlled as it had previously been; it now went on in a decentralized fashion, committed by killers who just happened to be present (Volkssturm, Waffen-SS, Hitler Jugend [HJ], local party officials, police officers, etc.).

Preventing concentration and labour camp prisoners from falling into enemy hands presumably figured at the top of the agenda of the Nazi leaders, whose motivations ranged from fear to eliminating witnesses to genocide and war crimes, all the way to taking hostages who might become useful as bargaining chips in negotiations with the Western powers.

Perpetrators who had to stand trial for their crimes had, for their own self-protection, no grounds to cite National Socialist morality or ideology as the invisible hand that steered their actions in the last months of the war. In court, almost all of them said they went along on account of their fear, their discipline, their ingrained obedience or their role as a small cog in the bureaucratic machinery. Nobody admitted having committed murder out of zeal or deep convictions. According to their statements justifying what they had done, they seem to have been acting in an ideology-free zone in which ordinary human beings were imprisoned in repressive, bureaucratic institutions and acted within this framework.

The massacre in Deutsch Schützen, a town in the present-day Austrian province of Burgenland, was one of the final acts of mass murder committed by the Nazis. The sources not only make it possible to reconstruct the commission of the crime almost in its entirety; several hours of interviews with one of the purported murderers and two of his accomplices conducted – and captured on film – more than sixty years after the fact constitute a new and unprecedented type of source material in research on the Nazis' crimes and enable us to consider the various perspectives of the perpetrators as they went about their deadly deeds. This article discusses the possible reasons why Adolf Storms talked to me and highlights the intersection of ideology and situational factors in perpetrating massacres. The interviews with Storms, two former HJ leaders and three Jewish survivors form the backbone of a book⁷, a documentary⁸ and this article.

The Hungarian-Jewish forced labourers' construction of the *Südostwall* in Deutsch Schützen

The death marches of Hungarian Jews took place in two stages. The first lasted from October 1944 to January 1945, when 50,000 out of the 240,000 Jews of Budapest as well as those male Jews still performing mandatory labour were marched to camps along the Hungarian-Austrian border and forced to build a line of defensive emplacements

that was referred to as the *Südostwall*. The second stage began in late March 1945 with the death marches from these camps to Mauthausen and Gunskirchen.

In October 1944, construction began on the *Südostwall*, fortifications consisting of tank traps, trenches, earthworks and bunkers that were to extend from Bratislava to Northern Italy and stave off the Red Army's drive to the west. In March 1945, 102,000 people including 86,000 foreigners – mostly Hungarian Jews – were at work on its construction.⁹ Their living conditions varied from place to place, depending on the respective camp commander's policies and staff of guards.

In Deutsch Schützen, living conditions were considerably better than at other camps along the *Südostwall*. The approximately five hundred Hungarian Jews – all of them men – sent to Deutsch Schützen between January and March 1945 initially seemed to have lucked out. Their postwar accounts describe their living conditions there as having been relatively tolerable.¹⁰ From their point of view, nothing suggests that their lives were in imminent danger.

The head of construction in this sector was HJ Bannführer Alfred Weber. His subordinates were eight HJ boys who were detailed to Deutsch Schützen in the autumn of 1944. Four SA men guarded the Jews.¹¹ Weber was born in 1921 in Deutschlandsberg, Styria. His career as a National Socialist began as an HJ-Führer from 1934 to 1938 when the Nazi Party was outlawed in Austria.¹² He enlisted in the Waffen-SS Division Der Führer in September 1939 serving as a Rottenführer. Weber was severely wounded near Moscow in October 1941, paralysed in his right leg, and he needed a cane to walk. He began service as an HJ Bannführer in Deutsch Schützen in the autumn of 1944. Weber's eight underlings – all born in 1928 – included Fritz Hagenauer and Johann Kaincz.

In late March 1945, the Eastern Front had almost reached the Austrian-Hungarian border. One could hear artillery fire every day. By all indications, the war would soon be over and the Jewish forced labourers would live to see it in relative safety in Deutsch Schützen.

29 March 1945: the massacre in Deutsch Schützen

As the Red Army approached in late March, chaos prevailed in the towns along the border. Countless people – armed units and civilian refugees alike – scurried westward in droves. Among them was SS-Unterscharführer Adolf Storms. He had just been overrun by the Red Army in Hungary, but was able to sneak through enemy lines under cover of darkness and reached Deutsch Schützen within the territory of the Third Reich on the evening of 28 March. Shortly before his arrival, two other SS men had turned up in Deutsch Schützen.¹³ Thus, on the evening of 28 March, Weber and the three SS men were gathered in the parish house discussing the situation on the ground. It was clear that it was only a matter of days, maybe even hours, until the Red Army would take the town.¹⁴ Weber was responsible for the 500 prisoners who, since the four SA men's desertion a few days before, were unguarded.

Johann Kaincz, then one of the HJ-Führer, later recalled that his superior, Weber, was at a loss about how to handle them: 'Weber said over and over again, almost sighing, "What in the world am I going to do with the Jews?"'¹⁵

During the night of 28–29 March 1945, Weber, Storms and the two unidentified SS men reached a decision: all 500 Jewish labourers were to be shot. Weber, Storms and the two

other SS men were involved in the decision-making process. In a conversation with Adolf Storms, I confronted him with the transcript of the trial of the HJ boys held in 1946 in Vienna, in which he was named as one of the three perpetrators.¹⁶

When I brought up the mass executions carried out that morning, Storms denied knowledge of them or his presence. Nevertheless, he himself then turned the conversation to the massacre by mentioning that his two fellow SS men led away a group of Jews. In response to questioning about what subsequently befell them, he gave only vague information. Rather than dispute the fact that murder had been committed, he referred to the event as hearsay, put the blame on the other two SS men, and denied his role as one of the perpetrators.

Weber had authority over the 500 forced labourers in his sector. He, in turn, took orders from Nazi Party Kreisleiter (district leader) Eduard Nicka and his staff who, on 22 March 1945, gave detailed instructions on 'Withdrawing Jews from Defensive Emplacement Construction Sites in Case of an Emergency';¹⁷ these were strictly complied with when the camps were evacuated a few days later. We can therefore assume that the district administration had issued Weber orders on the evacuation of the Jews in Deutsch Schützen.

The planned execution of all the approximately five hundred Jews in Deutsch Schützen was a solitary decision. In none of the other camps along the *Südostwall* were executions of all Jews carried out or even planned. The evacuations of the camps proceeded according to a set pattern. The plan worked out by the district administration and implemented from 28 March called for those capable of walking to go on a two- to three-day trek from the respective camps to an assembly point under guard by a crew of locals. Only those who were sick or unfit for the trek were either shot before the others set out or were left behind, usually to be killed later by retreating Waffen-SS units.

The sequence of steps in the decision-making process in Deutsch Schützen can be reconstructed only in rough terms. To do so, it is necessary to analyse these events from the perpetrators' point of view. Prior to the desertion of the four SA guards, nothing suggested that Weber was planning mass murder. But once the SA men disappeared, the only personnel Weber had to escort the 500 evacuated Jews were a few sixteen-year-old HJ boys, most of whom were unarmed. Weber had received the order from the district administration to move the Jews to the designated assembly point, but, in light of this inadequate crew of guards, might have seen no possibility of carrying it out. The highest priority was preventing Jews from falling into the hands of the Red Army. The rumour that the Jews were to be shot circulated in the village.¹⁸ But the young HJ boys were not up to this murderous task – there were not enough of them, and they did not have the necessary mental toughness. Even though Johann Kaincz feared that the HJ-Führer too would have committed murder if Bannführer Weber had ordered them to do so (see the excerpt from his interview later in the article), it is hardly conceivable that a handful of sixteen-year-old boys would have shot 500 people.

The arrival of three SS men decisively changed the room for manoeuvre. Suddenly and unexpectedly, Weber had a crew of battle-hardened veterans in his midst. It was their presence that made it possible to translate a deadly intention into homicidal deeds. Not only in Eastern Europe had the Waffen-SS displayed no scruples about murdering Jews; they were also among the main perpetrators of crimes committed on Austrian territory in the final phase of the war that cost many Jews their lives.¹⁹ They were surely aware of Himmler's order that Jews not be permitted to fall into enemy hands. Clearly, Weber was in

command of the Jews and the HJ boys, but he had no authority over these Waffen-SS men, just as they could not issue him orders. This means that the decision must have been reached by mutual agreement. In any case, having resolved to commit murder meant that Weber contravened the district administration's order to transport his forced labourers to the assembly point. Thus, ultimate blame for the massacre must be placed on Alfred Weber.

After two groups totalling approximately sixty men had been shot, the massacre was suddenly halted. 'Halt! Cease fire!' These shouted commands brought an end to the shootings. The three SS men thereupon terminated their operation in the woods and walked back to town. The reason for having chosen this *modus operandi* for the killings was the numerical relationship between victims and perpetrators: three SS men armed with submachine guns faced 500 Jews. Forming groups of twenty to thirty and equipping them with shovels and spades to make it seem like a work detail was how they hoped to carry out the killings without raising suspicions. From the murderers' perspective, culling more victims at one time would have been too risky – after all, the Jews had tools in their hands that they could also have used as weapons. There was the danger that, at the sight of the armed SS men and the trench containing the lifeless corpses of their comrades, they would attempt to defend themselves or flee. But the method they opted for had one decisive disadvantage: it was time-consuming. About an hour elapsed from the point the men were selected until they lay dead in the woods.²⁰ Forming groups of twenty to thirty men means that it would have taken more than twenty hours to murder all 500 people. Thus, the plan was practically unfeasible. And even for hardcore SS men, a 'mission' like this would have been asking too much. Plus, time was of the essence since the Red Army was then only a few kilometres away.

The march to Hartberg

The approximately four hundred Jews²¹ who escaped being massacred were lined up in columns. As Ernő Lazarovits recalls, they were told they were moving on to another work site.²² Thus began the next chapter of their tale of suffering – the death march. The HJ-Führer, Weber, Storms and the two other SS men accompanied them on the two-day trek to their initial destination, Hartberg. On the first day of the march, Storms suddenly turned up at the end of the column, which was being guarded by three HJ-Führer, Karl and Wilhelm Bundschuh and Fritz Hagenauer.

Hagenauer: We hadn't been with the group for long when we saw that Storms had stopped with three Jews. One of them couldn't walk anymore. He said to him, very casually: 'You needn't go any further'. He can't go on, the Jew said. He took him off to the side and said: 'You two stay there'.

Author: To the Jews?

Hagenauer: Yeah. They didn't really understand it. Then he took the Jew to the side of the road and shot him. We saw that.²³

I showed Storms the passage in the transcript of the HJ-Führer's trial in which Fritz Hagenauer and Karl Bundschuh accused him of having shot a Jew during the march to Hartberg. He read the testimony intently for several minutes without the slightest change in his facial expression. Then he put the document aside and spoke in a concentrated manner and a calm voice.

- Storms: Some of that could have even been true. Partially.
 Author: Which part?
 Storms: That one of the Jews there couldn't go on. But not that I shot him. That a Jew remained behind and a couple of others were with him, that's true. But I just left them behind, because I had to move on.
 Author: They just remained behind?
 Storms: They just remained behind.
 Author: What's not true?
 Storms: That I shot him. That's not true.
 Author: So why did he testify to that?
 Storms: That I don't know. Since, when it came to shooting, I wouldn't have just gone along so easily. In war, I always tended to hesitate a little.²⁴

Surprisingly, Adolf Storms recalled that one of the prisoners remained behind. I informed Storms that a few of the HJ-Führer who had accused him of this murder were still alive. Then, at the very latest, Storms had to have realized that he would definitely be indicted for murder.

- Author: There's the suspicion of murder.
 Storms: Yes.
 Author: And murder doesn't come under the statute of limitations.
 Storms: I only know that I didn't murder anybody. I don't know any more than that. And I can say that with a clear conscience. Anything else ...²⁵

Once the prisoners arrived in Hartberg, the guard detail disbanded. The HJ boys formed an anti-tank squad that was commanded by Storms and existed until the end of the war.²⁶ It was due to the weeks of service in this unit that the HJ-Führer learned the name of their commander and remembered it over the years. The Jewish forced labourers from Deutsch Schützen together with several other groups of Jews who had worked on the *Südostwall* went on a forced march lasting several days to the Mauthausen concentration camp and then on to its subsidiary camp in Günskirchen.²⁷ It is estimated that 23,000 Hungarian Jews perished during these death marches – shot in broad daylight by guards or succumbing in misery to emaciation and overexertion.²⁸

The trial of the HJ-Führer

In October 1946, the five HJ-Führer stood trial in Vienna, charged with having been accessories to murder. They had all been sixteen years old at the time of the commission of the crime, and thus had experienced the *Anschluss* – the German invasion and annexation of Austria in March 1938 – at the age of ten. They were among the first to receive classic National Socialist training, joining the Jungvolk at ten and the HJ at fourteen. They had completed various HJ leadership programmes before being detailed to Deutsch Schützen in the autumn of 1944 as HJ-Führer. They were indoctrinated to obey their superiors' orders unconditionally.

The reconstruction of this crime's commission as presented above is based on the testimony of these HJ-Führer. How many lives were actually claimed by this mass murder remains unclear. The estimates range from fifty-seven to eighty. Of decisive importance to the court was whether the HJ-Führer had had the opportunity to flee or otherwise evade involvement in this act. All the defendants stated that refusal to comply with an

order was punishable by death. The verdict stated that the defendants 'had not even displayed the will to avoid carrying out their assignment. But someone who did not make the slightest attempt at some point to escape complicity in the criminal machinations of his superior cannot claim to have been under duress'.²⁹ The five former HJ-Führer were sentenced to terms of imprisonment from fifteen months to three years.

The trial of HJ-Bannführer Alfred Weber

Alfred Weber was caught in West Germany in July 1955. He had his brother's passport on him. He had spent ten years on the run or in hiding. He was charged with having incited murder and attempted murder, and with war crimes.³⁰ Weber's defence strategy from the outset was to deny having been in Deutsch Schützen at the time of the massacre: 'I had absolutely nothing to do with these shootings. I was in Edlitz and Höll at the time, and issued instructions that the labourers working on the defensive emplacements there be evacuated'.³¹ According to Weber, he had no authority over men in the Waffen-SS, thus he could not have ordered them to carry out these shootings. He claimed that he did not learn about the killings until he returned to Deutsch Schützen on 29 March 1945 at about 9 am, whereupon he immediately called the district administration, from which he received the order to stop the shootings at once and to get the Jews on their way to Hartberg. Nevertheless, it took quite a while for Weber to name someone who could corroborate that he had been in Edlitz and Höll on the morning of 29 March. Finally, just before his case went to trial, he named a witness from Edlitz, who testified to having seen a man in Edlitz on the morning of 29 March, though he could not say for sure that it had been Weber. In response to the court's question as to why he had not been able to recall this event until now, he had to admit that a conversation with a friend of Weber's had jogged his memory.³² Furthermore, only two of the HJ-Führer could recall that the order to murder the Jews had come from their superior, Weber. Although the jurors did not regard this as having completely refuted all allegations, Weber was found not guilty. The trial left the impression that the court was not particularly interested in finding out the truth and convicting Weber. The only defence witness who could testify that Weber had been in Edlitz was subjected to outside influence and thus had no credibility, but the court did not even raise the obvious issues of tampering and false testimony. In this trial too, Storms was named as one of the three SS men who had committed the murders, but once again no attempt was made to locate him.

The discovery of the mass grave

Decades after knowledge of the Deutsch Schützen killings had faded, the mass grave was unearthed in May 1995. Its discovery should have triggered an immediate criminal investigation to reveal the perpetrators. However, nothing suggests that the authorities who conducted this investigation ever even considered regarding those who died in Deutsch Schützen as victims of a crime and calling in the public prosecutor's office. The investigators can be expected to have consulted the transcripts of the 1946 trial of the HJ-Führer and the trial of Weber in 1956, in both of which Storms was alleged to be one of the murderers, and they would have been able to locate him quickly by submitting a request to the German authorities. But the Ministry of the Interior was not interested in

finding the perpetrators. It was decided to erect a gravesite at the location without forwarding this case to the appropriate authorities. And thus, the last chance to bring the murderers to justice seemed to have been lost forever. At this point, Storms did not have an inkling that this had been his third brush with a day of reckoning.

The Storms case was by no means an isolated incident in Austria's postwar judicial system. In contrast to West Germany, Austria in 1945 enacted a War Criminal Law that served as the basis for trying violent crimes committed by Nazis. From 1945 to 1955, these crimes were adjudicated in People's Courts (*Volksgerichten*) presided over by two professional judges and three jurors. About five hundred people were convicted of National Socialist crimes of violence, and forty-three death sentences were handed down.³³ With respect to serious felonies, it is striking that sixty-nine per cent of all verdicts that entailed capital punishment or lifelong imprisonment were for *Endphasenverbrechen*, crimes committed in the final days of World War II in Austria. In Austria, 125 legal proceedings against 265 persons charged with *Endphasenverbrechen* resulted in convictions, of which twenty-nine were death sentences (twenty-three of which were carried out) and twenty-one called for life imprisonment.³⁴ Thirty-five such criminal proceedings involved crimes against Hungarian-Jewish forced labourers.³⁵

Consideration of *Endphasenverbrechen* and other violent crimes committed by Nazis reveals that, by 1949, interest in pursuing criminal prosecution had already sunk drastically. Over ninety-one per cent of all guilty verdicts had been delivered by the end of January 1949.³⁶ From 1945 to 1950, 138 persons charged with *Endphasenverbrechen* had been tried by a *Volksgerecht* in Vienna; in the five years from 1951 to 1955, by contrast, there were only four trials of individuals charged with *Endphasenverbrechen*, all of which ended in acquittal.³⁷ Following the withdrawal of the Allies, the signing of the Austrian State Treaty and the abolition of the *Volksgerichte* (which were replaced by courts with a judge and jury) in 1955, criminal prosecutions decreased rapidly. From 1955 to 1975, a mere forty-six persons were charged with violent crimes committed in conjunction with National Socialism; eighteen of them were found guilty.³⁸ Furthermore, there were numerous scandalously unjust verdicts that were reported in the media worldwide and publicly criticized. In 1974, the approximately four hundred criminal investigations still underway were terminated by Social Democratic Minister of Justice Christian Broda, for several reasons, not the least of which had to do with Austria's image. In 1975, the last Nazi trial in the history of the Austrian Second Republic ended in a verdict of not guilty.

Adolf Storms

I called Adolf Storms in the summer of 2008. He confirmed that he had been a member of the Wiking division of the Waffen-SS. There was no doubt that this was the man suspected of having been one of the perpetrators of the massacre of Jews in Deutsch Schützen. A few days later, I rang the doorbell of a modest house in an allotment garden complex on the outskirts of Duisburg and asked him if he would consent to being interviewed on camera about his wartime experiences. To my great surprise, he agreed and invited me in.

Storms was born in 1919 and finished school in 1933 just as Hitler took power. He then completed an apprenticeship as a nurseryman but could not find a job in gardening so he was hired by a maritime shipping company, Rheinische Schifffahrt, where he worked as a ship's boy and sailor until he was conscripted into the National Labour Service

(Reichsarbeitsdienst), but an explosion left him deaf in his left ear and he was discharged. In September 1939, he was conscripted for service in the National Railway (Reichsbahn). Despite his injury, he volunteered for the Waffen-SS, even though he was not fit for wartime military service. He was determined to join the Waffen-SS, however, which he succeeded in doing in the spring of 1942. From the spring of 1942 until the end of the war, Adolf Storms was deployed on the Eastern Front.³⁹ His name does not frequently come up in the files of the Nazi era. A request for permission to wed submitted to the Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt and a few documents in the Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle are the only traces he left behind in the regime's bureaucracy. He was part of National Socialism's military rank-and-file, like more than 900,000 other men who fought in the Waffen-SS.⁴⁰ His military career was unremarkable. By the end of the war he had risen to SS-Unterscharführer, the lowest rank of non-commissioned officer. Wounded several times, he was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class in the spring of 1943. If, in the last weeks of the war, he had not commanded an anti-tank squad made up of a dozen members of the HJ who were able to recall his name afterwards, then Storms too would have vanished into postwar anonymity. This alone is how we know that Storms was one of the men who massacred at least fifty-seven Jewish forced labourers and murdered one other.

Although he was eighty-nine years old, Adolf Storms came across as alert and highly focused. His powers of recollection turned out to be excellent in many instances. He gave a detailed account of his service on the Eastern Front – being severely wounded in September 1942 in the Caucasus, close combat, breaking out of enemy encirclement, and retreat through Hungary to the Austrian-Hungarian border in early 1945. After being held in a US internment camp in Dachau, he returned in 1947 to Duisburg where he was rehired by the railroad. From his employer, he received a parcel of land upon which he built the house he had lived in since 1948. He was a passionate gardener and served for decades as chairman of the local allotment garden association. He ended his career with the Deutsche Bahn as a dispatcher in Duisburg.

In our first conversation, he tried to give the impression of being an apolitical, Catholic *Rheinländer* who was a member of the NSDAP and who just happened to end up in the Waffen-SS. In fact, Storms' Nazi career proceeded in classic fashion: he joined the HJ in 1936, and joined the Nazi Party as was encouraged in the SS and declared himself a Believer in God. Confrontation with the facts broke down his construction of having been an apolitical soldier. A few days after our first conversation, I got a call from him. His voice sounded anguished.

Storms: Yeah, somehow there's something to that but I can't get to the bottom of it.

Author: What are the gaps in your memory? Do you want me to recount the story?

Storms: I've read the files. And I've been going over it in my mind. It was this way – I don't know how I can explain it. The war was over. You came home, and you had a kid and a couple of sisters-in-law and their husbands, and everything else you just put behind you. You just thought: so, let's go on from here. All of that stuff sank into oblivion and you never hauled it out again. Now, it's hard to separate the truths from the falsehoods. What's right now and what's wrong? This has really been bothering me.

Author: You said that you could imagine that it's the truth, what I said to you the last time.

Storms: If that's so, then I'm a murderer.

Author: Yes, if that's the case, you're a murderer.

Storms: Yeah, and then you can't go on with your life. No ...⁴¹

This telephone conversation even further inclined me to believe that there were gaps in his recollections. What other reason could he have had to call me? He didn't deny the deed. Quite the contrary. Then, in the midst of the conversation, he gave a veiled, indirect confession. With the words 'But the way you put it is undoubtedly the way it was', he acknowledged my interpretational sovereignty regarding his participation in the executions. He confessed to a murder that he seemed not to recall.

When I saw Adolf Storms one last time, he met me on his porch and lamented that his granddaughter with whom he shared the house had forbidden him to engage in any further conversations. A few days later, I received a temporary restraining order barring me from setting foot on Storms' property.

Adolf Storms is charged with murder

In October 2009, Adolf Storms was charged with having 'committed homicide collaboratively in at least fifty-seven instances and, in one additional instance, acting on base motives; moreover, having done so cruelly in fifty-seven instances and, in the additional instance, insidiously'.⁴² The charges filed against Storms were reported in the *New York Times*, the *Jerusalem Post* and *Der Spiegel*. But in June 2010, before his case could be tried, Adolf Storms died in Duisburg at the age of ninety-one.⁴³

Assessing the probable outcome of Adolf Storms' trial, the public prosecutor in charge of the case concluded:

I believe that the four eyewitnesses we had along with the other documentary evidence – the depositions by the witnesses who are now deceased, the transcripts of the Austrian trials – put us in a relatively good position as far as that goes. It would definitely have added some weight if we had obtained a confession from him. But that probably wouldn't have had any effect on the outcome.⁴⁴

The eyewitness testimony and the circumstantial evidence against Storms were overwhelming. It is highly probable that death saved Adolf Storms from a guilty verdict and a sentence of life in prison.

Perpetrator profile

Three groups of protagonists were involved in the mass murder in Deutsch Schützen: HJ-Bannführer Alfred Weber who instigated this deed; five HJ-Führer whom Weber ordered to escort the victims to the execution site; and three SS men who shot the victims in the trench. Whereas the adolescent HJ leaders were following orders, the others acted on the basis of joint consultation, on their own initiative and contrary to the district administration's order to escort the Jewish prisoners to Hartberg.

After the war, how did the perpetrators deal with what they had done? Weber hid out under a false identity for ten years. But when he finally had his day in court in 1956, the brief postwar phase in which the Austrian judiciary handed down verdicts against Nazi criminals had long since ended. Weber's trial was the first prosecution of Nazi crimes to be held following the Allies' withdrawal and the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. What had a major impact on this trial was the fact that the Austrian judiciary no longer

had to give any consideration to the Allies, and thus did not have the slightest intention of convicting Weber.

The five HJ-Führer were the only ones who served time in jail on account of their involvement in mass murder. Now, more than sixty years later, Hagenauer, who was incarcerated for fifteen months, feels embittered about his conviction:

In our cell in the courthouse, someone had written on the wall: 'If you say NO, home you go; if YES you say, here you stay'. We all said YES. We all thought we hadn't done anything to anyone. We all told what had happened. And there we had to stay.⁴⁵

On the other hand, Kaincz's reflections on his involvement in the massacre were more multifaceted:

Author: In 1946, you and the other HJ leaders were convicted of aiding and abetting murder, and you served two years in prison. What do you have to say about your and your comrades' trial?

Kaincz: At the first moment, it was a little shocking. But then I came to see that it was a thoroughly fair trial, and I believe the verdict was justified too.

Author: If your superior officer, HJ-Bannführer Weber, had ordered you, the Hitler Youth leaders, to shoot Jews, can you imagine what you would have done?

Kaincz: None of us would have refused. I don't think we would have disobeyed. Since the age of ten, we were trained to follow orders. I believe, I'm afraid, we would have shot them.⁴⁶

The young HJ-Führer did not commit excesses; it had not been ideologically motivated racial hatred that drove their involvement in murder; and they were not banal bureaucrats doing evil from behind a desk. They had neither planned nor committed the crime. Their guilt was attributable to having been obedient recipients of orders. Due to their political socialization, it had never even occurred to them to desert or to defy a commanding officer. They were part of situative dynamics of violence in which they as actors were assigned a place that they could not subjectively influence. In this sense, they were both victims and perpetrators.

We do not know if Storms had committed atrocities of any kind in Eastern Europe. Considering how smoothly the killings went in Deutsch Schützen and the cold-blooded murder of an exhausted Jew during the death march to Hartberg, executing human beings seems to have been a routine task for him. At least in the case of the murders in Deutsch Schützen, Storms had to have proceeded under the assumption that there were living eyewitnesses who could remember his name. How did Adolf Storms live with the knowledge that he could be found out at any time? As early as the summer of 1946, preliminary investigations were already underway in Austria of the HJ-Führers' involvement in the Deutsch Schützen massacre, in which Storms was named as a purported perpetrator. On 1 August 1946, the Austrian authorities issued Warrant #1,800 for the arrest of Storms.⁴⁷ But the range of this manhunt obviously did not extend to the Bavarian internment camp in Dachau.

The lack of political will and disinterest on the part of the investigating authorities in Austria in conjunction with Weber's trial were all that prevented it in 1956. Following the discovery of the mass grave in 1995, Austrian investigators would also have come upon the name Storms – if only they had investigated. Ultimately, Storms did not have just happenstance to thank for the fact that he went undetected until 2008; it was due

to the Austrian authorities' incompetence, disinterest and negligence. Regardless of how Storms justified what he had done, he knew it was punishable as murder.

One of the key questions that emerges is: what could have motivated Storms to invite me into his home and let me interview him on camera about what happened in Deutsch Schützen? At the very latest when talk turned to executions, it must have dawned on him that it might be advisable to break off contact with me. But just the opposite occurred. A few days later, Storms called me. He was appalled, he said in an anguished voice. If what I had said were true, then that would make him a murderer. And he asked me to help him recover his memories. I conducted two more interviews with him in which he continued to maintain having no recollection of the massacre and that he had not shot the exhausted Jew during the march to Hartberg. There are some basic approaches to explaining his behaviour.

- (1) Storms was simply lying to me. The memories of the murders were all too present in his mind. He engaged in conversations with me to obtain more information about the case – e.g. who was testifying against him and whether any eyewitnesses to the killings were still alive – to better prepare for the impending trial. Nevertheless, his questions in these respects were not really very precise or probing, so I did not get the impression that he was merely putting on a show. But I was not totally certain.
- (2) Repression as a form of forgetting motivated by the emotional pain that traumatic, conflicted memories evoke.⁴⁸ After all, inadequate ability to reproduce past events or difficulties summoning the memory of them does not incontrovertibly prove that material that was previously saved to memory has since been totally expunged. What occurs more frequently is that, at a later point in time, under changed circumstances or using different methods, the material believed to have been forgotten can nevertheless be recalled.⁴⁹ In my dealings with Storms, I more or less consciously proceeded on the basis of the working hypothesis that he had repressed what had happened, and I should help him recover his memory. But aside from a single telephone conversation, nothing suggests that Storms was plagued by mental pain or traumatic, conflicted memories stemming from the crimes committed in Deutsch Schützen.
- (3) Falsification of memory – acts of adaptation that are carried out intentionally to achieve a specific purpose and are not to be deemed erroneous. Rather, it must be asked what end is pursued by this deviation. Thus, modified memories certainly can be conducive to achieving our personal and social aims and thereby foster our well-being – for instance, by remembering our behaviour in a specific situation differently than it actually was or by avoiding recollection of unpleasant experiences and thus forgetting them or falsifying the memory of them.⁵⁰ Storms might have actively forgotten his crimes in order to avoid the thought of exposure and subsequent murder charges that were the threat he lived with for decades.
- (4) There is at least one more explanatory model. It could have been that Storms simply forgot his homicidal deeds. No suppression, no falsified memory, no lies; just the absence of any emotions in the commission of these acts and thus the absence of any necessity to process that which transpired in order to store it to memory for autobiographical purposes. 'Emotions are key components of the autobiographical system of memories; events that we take to heart or that turn our stomach are considered the

ones to be burned into our minds and to influence our future decisions.⁵¹ Without emotion, autobiographical episodic memory would not exist. The events we experience, in order for them to be stored to our autobiographical (long-term) memory, have to be of personal significance. 'In most cases, specific events are recalled in detail only when they were surprising or experienced for the first time, if they were accompanied by strong emotions, if they were momentous, or if they are frequently recalled and related to others.'⁵² Or in the words of social psychologist Harald Welzer: 'Nothing is transferred from the short-term to the long-term memory system that is not somehow emotionally significant for the person remembering it'.⁵³ But were the crimes he committed emotionally significant to Adolf Storms? The sequence of events rather suggests performance of a routine task, eliminating a 'problem' like ones that had previously arisen and been solved in a similar fashion. Remember his sentence: 'In war, I always tended to hesitate a little'.⁵⁴ Here, he could not have been referring to combat on the front, where there was no hesitation. That this massacre had been carried out by experienced killers is further attested to by a letter written by the sole survivor of the mass murder, Dr Sándor Künzstler. He recalls that the SS men 'were cold-blooded, smiling and chatting with one another as they shot us'.⁵⁵ No one taking part in his first mass execution could possibly have conducted himself in such a way. Rather, everything suggests that the three men, like so many others in the Waffen-SS, had 'extensive experience systematically murdering civilians in Eastern Europe and the Balkans'.⁵⁶ The executions were a routine assignment, carried out in passing as it were. It seems to have been more of an annoying exercise completed nonchalantly and without evoking any emotion. When word came from the village that the whole thing was called off, the SS men put up no resistance. They walked back to town and took over as escorts of the very Jews they had been about to shoot.

The massacre was carried out by volunteers. They were not under orders; they were helping out a former comrade-in-arms, an SS man who had been crippled in battle and now needed their support. Is it reasonable to expect that they would permanently remember such a – from the perpetrators' perspective – trivial episode? They were not in mortal danger, which could have transformed the event into a long-term memory. After all, liquidating Jewish men and women without an explicit order was part of the Waffen-SS's standard repertoire during the war's final phase in Austria.⁵⁷

To understand how these men thought and acted, then, it is necessary to call to mind their emotional makeup. Only in this way is it possible to perceive and even attempt to fathom the Nazis' crimes. This is impossible using a normative approach derived from our contemporary value system, which gets bogged down in accusations that are morally justified but nevertheless epistemologically unsatisfactory and thus ultimately fruitless. Here, the process of reference framework analysis developed by Harald Welzer for use in research on Nazi killers helps us to comprehend how people interpreted situations and acted upon them. Welzer's approach is to reconstruct the interpretational pattern and preconceptions within which Nazi killers perceived situations and how they interpreted these perceptions. In order to arrive at useful insights, contemporary normative standards cannot be enlisted to serve as the basis of scholarly analyses of Nazi offenders' deeds.⁵⁸

Motives for the crimes

Numerous approaches have been put forth by scholarly research to explain the behaviour of perpetrators who were personally involved in the commission of their crimes: racism, brutalization in battle and the increasingly routine nature of killing, the particular criteria used to select the people to carry out these tasks, careerism, zeal to carry out orders, obedience to authority and ideological indoctrination.⁵⁹

Let us begin with those motives that were not relevant to what occurred in Deutsch Schützen. In this case, there were no criteria used to select the squad of killers. All three SS men just happened to be there; they had come to town with no intention of murdering 500 Jews. Careerism no longer played a role shortly before the war ended. Nor were blind obedience, zealously carrying out orders and respect for authority operational as motives – no one ordered these men to kill Jews.

The Waffen-SS was part of 'The Order of the Death's Head'. Its members were political soldiers, 'warriors for a *Weltanschauung*' who implemented the Nazis' ideological fundamentals on a daily basis in warfare. Units of the Waffen-SS Panzer Division Wiking had already shot thousands of Jews in Western Ukraine during the summer of 1941.⁶⁰ The merciless struggle against 'Jewish Bolshevism' and 'racial war against the Jews' constituted the decisive political-ideological foundation of their deeds, and continued to do so even when, beginning in 1943, so-called *fremdvölkische* (non-Germanic) elements and forcibly recruited ethnic Germans joined their ranks. Thus, numerous Waffen-SS units were involved in the murder of Hungarian Jews during the final phase of the war in Austria.⁶¹ The Waffen-SS was the organization that most fully lived up to the commitment to put the Nazi ideology and worldview into actual everyday social practice. Members of the Waffen-SS were embedded in an organizational reference framework that explicitly encompassed the precept to kill Jews. Within this reference framework, killing Jews was principally called for, reasonable and the right thing to do unless overriding considerations intervened. Accordingly, the personal disposition of Storms and his two fellow SS men were only a secondary factor. Of course, no one could have forced them to carry out the massacre. And Christopher Browning was certainly correct when he concluded in his seminal analysis of the murder of Jews by Police Reserve Battalion 101: 'Human responsibility is ultimately an individual matter'.⁶² Nevertheless, that does not mean we should overestimate the importance of the personality structures of the protagonists. What Gerhard Paul said about the crimes that members of the Gestapo committed during the final phase of the war surely holds true for the Waffen-SS:

To shed light on the causes and motives, a multifactorial, intentional and functionalist approach seems to come closest to historical reality, whereby the weight to be assigned to the individual factors is quite difficult to determine and was likely to have been dependent on individual contingencies.⁶³

In the case under examination here, the fear that if able-bodied male prisoners of the Nazis were left alive they could be expected to take revenge on SS and HJ men, German women and children or assist the approaching Soviet troops in doing so might have played a role. After all, the 500 forced labourers were equipped with shovels and spades – that is, implements that also could have been used as weapons. What Blatman generally postulated about the final days of the war – that the unrest among

the populace was heightened 'to the point of unprecedented fear of the inevitable moment when this horde of purportedly dangerous, violent and hate-filled men would be unleashed upon the German population'⁶⁴ – could also have been the case in Deutsch Schützen. Chaotic conditions prevailed in the village. The Red Army was only a few kilometres away and, following the desertion of the SA guard detachment, the rumour circulated that Weber wanted to have the Jews shot.⁶⁵

We can assume that solidarity was an important factor. When their former Waffen-SS comrade-in-arms, Weber, told them that the Jews were unsupervised following the desertion of the SA guard crew and the Red Army was approaching, they had obviously decided on a solution to this problem: to shoot János Földösi, Ferenc Haiman, György Klein, László Komlós, György Sárkány, József Sebestyén, György Schwimmer, Péter Szanto, Imre Wallerstein, József Weinberger, József Weisz and about fifty more Hungarian Jews whose names we still don't know.

It was a voluntary decision, since Weber, an HJ-Bannführer, could not issue orders to SS men. What applied to *Endphasenverbrechen* in general – that the commission of murder had 'become a nihilistic, locally limited act that was no longer ordered and organized by the higher echelon'⁶⁶ – was true of this deed too. They acted out of comradeship, out of a sense of social obligation. The acts of this execution detail were not violent excesses; this was not a case of men short-circuiting in the heat of battle. They were carrying out neither a reprisal nor an order. This was murder, planned jointly, on short notice. Nor did Storms betray emotion when he shot the exhausted Jew during the march to Hartberg. He seemed almost impassive. Displaying no emotion and proceeding in a matter-of-fact manner indicates that, for Storms and the other SS men, such executions were nothing out of the ordinary. In his eyewitness testimony, Karl Bundschuh, who was one of the HJ boys, described Storms' cold-blooded commission of murder.

Question: How did Storms behave afterwards?

Answer: Like normal, it didn't bother him at all. He just turned around and walked away, he followed the trail to catch up with the others.⁶⁷

As for Storms personally, we can assume from his membership in the Nazi Party, the Allgemeine SS, his voluntary membership in the Waffen-SS and his declaration as a 'Believer in God' that he was an ideologically convinced National Socialist. American sociologist Michael Mann has studied the biographies of 1,581 Nazi mass murderers – the largest sample ever subjected to scholarly analysis – and evaluated the information on the basis of various sociological variables. 'The results all point in the same direction: the vast majority of the hardcore perpetrators were true believers in National Socialism.'⁶⁸ Other criteria such as social class, occupation and age group play a subsidiary role. These results bring out a decisive point: the central importance of the ideological component in the commission of murder. Here, ideology does not necessarily mean a sophisticatedly conceived *Weltanschauung*. The *weltanschauliche* framework of reference for the Holocaust was, as a valid norm, in no small part based upon and confirmed according to a theory of action by means of the practice of murder itself. This could be called a 'learning by doing effect'.⁶⁹

A few indispensable steps are necessary in order for the ideological justification to murder a particular group of people – in this case, the Jewish population – to be internalized to such an extent that homicidal acts are anticipated as normative actions and

perceived as a moral duty. Welzer regards this transformation of the normative framework as a social process in which the radical exclusion of a particular group is viewed increasingly positively and the prohibition of killing ultimately transformed into a commandment to kill.⁷⁰ The systematic reconfiguration of society's normative orientation into a 'National Socialist morality'⁷¹ the core of which was the destruction of the Jews resulted in value-based convictions, rationality and individual action in National Socialism being oriented on these criteria. Every individual did not undergo this moral reformatting to the same extent. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that, in general, those who had official functions in the Nazi system and members of the Waffen-SS more strongly internalized National Socialist morality than the general public. As 'political soldiers' of the Waffen-SS, they defined themselves in terms of their membership in the racial *Volksgemeinschaft*, which they represented as a military unit serving on the front. In their conception of self, they were defending the values and survival of the German people on the front line of the worldwide ideological civil war to prevent their threatened destruction by 'Jewish Bolshevism' and its confederates.⁷² As a member of the Waffen-SS, Storms saw himself as one of those who were putting National Socialist morality into action on a daily basis. With this transformation of the normative framework into 'ethnic fundamentalism',⁷³ actions that are considered deviant, criminal deeds according to other conceptions of morality are regarded as integral, accepted behaviour. In the words of Raphael Gross:

Whether truly all Nazi perpetrators were always convinced that they were acting pursuant to an inner conviction in the commission of their crimes is ultimately immaterial since, in any case, they all acted as if they were. Thus, characteristic of National Socialism are the enthusiasm and the inner conviction of many of its disciples. Even in situations in which their own interests would have suggested acting differently, a large number of Germans eagerly obeyed the imperatives of murder and warfare.⁷⁴

It was not until tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews were deported to Eastern Austria beginning in the summer of 1944 that the 'Jewish Problem' long since considered solved re-emerged on Nazi Germany's home turf. As mentioned above, there are multiple reasons for the crimes committed during the final phase of the war. Nevertheless, these crimes, committed not only against Jews but also against other groups (for example escaped forced labourers, inmates of work education camps and concentration camps⁷⁵), in the final phase of the war are precisely what demonstrate how deeply rooted in society the National Socialist morality of extermination actually was in the spring of 1945.

The fact that these murderous deeds had been committed on the basis of a National Socialist moral code was too unsettling to be uttered in post-Nazi German and Austrian society. The crimes were too monstrous and the society was too involved in them for the moral principles behind them to be called to accountability. Most people who did not have to talk kept silent. Their motives in National Socialism could no longer be spoken of openly in a post-Nazi setting.

Storms did this too. Within his family, he avoided talking about the war. It had ended in defeat in 1945; it was time to stop dwelling on the past. 'No one wanted to hear about war anymore' is how Storms summed up his attitude after the fighting stopped. Don't ask any more questions, and hope to move on in this spirit. Perhaps it was this impossibility of communicating the motives and deeds of bygone days within a contemporary moral frame of reference – and not his unrecovered memories – that made it impossible for

Storms to talk about them with me too. From a modern-day perspective, he had committed murder. His horrified telephone call – ‘If that’s so, then I’m a murderer!’ – was oriented to contemporary normative standards. On the other hand, within the National Socialist normative framework, exterminating Jews was a duty. Thus, Storms had acted in a different referential framework, one in which killing a Jew was not classified as murder. That does not excuse what he did in the least, but it makes it understandable in the sense of fathomable.

The probability of being called to account for his deeds diminished steadily. Sixty-three years elapsed before Storms was confronted with his murders. And he spoke without saying all that much.

Conclusion

This article sheds light on how it was possible for Adolf Storms to go unpunished for sixty-three years, even though it would have been very simple to discover his whereabouts. It thus provides a case study that demonstrates the workings of the Austrian postwar judicial system, which was characterized by disinterest, unwillingness and sloppiness in the prosecution of Nazi perpetrators.

To grasp how it was possible that, only a few weeks and days before the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of Jews were still being forced to go on death marches, starved and murdered before the eyes of the Third Reich’s populace, we have to attempt to understand what was going on in the minds of the perpetrators. Postwar trials are rarely informative. The perpetrators’ testimony reflects their agenda: shift responsibility, deny these deeds and blur their motives. We seldom come across hints as to what motivated them. Independent of this, however, it can be said of all their decisions with respect to their own behaviour – for instance, the shooting of Jews – that they were not only arrived at individually; rather, they were socially contextualized.

‘National Socialist morality’ defined itself as an explicitly utopian social alternative juxtaposed to the Enlightenment. It was based on the idea of creating a ‘racially homogeneous and healthy *Volkskörper* [body of the people]’. This social state was to be achieved by the ongoing eradication of all ‘racially inferior’ elements. Defined as the main opponent standing in the way of attaining this goal was the ‘Jewish race’. Its continued existence would doom the entire project. National Socialism’s racist, eliminationist social project engendered a new morality, new values, a new rationality. If the destruction of all Jews had highest priority in National Socialism, then every act that contributed to attaining the established goal was deemed moral, rational and valued. That which was considered deviant, criminal activity in other conceptions of morality became, in the wake of the transformation of the normative framework, integral and accepted behaviour.

With the exception of the study by Gitta Sereny more than forty years ago of Franz Stangl, the commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka,⁷⁶ and her methodologically problematic, interview-based biography of Albert Speer,⁷⁷ no one has endeavoured to engage the perpetrators in conversation and to interrogate them with inquisitorial precision without being judgemental about their deeds and crimes. We can assume that, in this case, solidarity among the members of the Order of the Death’s Head was an important framework of reference for solving Weber’s ‘Jewish problem’ by shooting all of them.

Furthermore, the way the massacre was carried out, as well as Adolf Storms' shooting of a Jew during the death march, confirms that these scenarios were nothing unusual for the murderers.

We are still left with an unanswered question: why did Storms consent to spending fifteen hours in front of a camera being interviewed? Initially, I proceeded under the assumption that Storms had suppressed the deeds and he wanted to recall them to memory in quasi-therapeutic conversational sessions. But why should he have suppressed them? With his pitiless mental acuity, philosopher Günther Anders makes it incumbent upon us to face the question: why this non-recollection of the Holocaust on the part of its perpetrators? In a few sentences, he unsparingly confronts this hollow cliché of 'suppression' and sets the record straight:

This talk of 'suppression' insinuates that, in those times, men had experiences that could not be remembered because they were unbearable and impossible to resolve. It thus presupposes a trauma ... [but] they were already incapable of grasping the horror of the unspeakable acts they had committed or witnessed, of perceiving and registering these horrors as horrible ... They are said to have suppressed this? That does them far too much honour, since the expression presumes that they had actually and secretly been touched and appalled. But they were not.⁷⁸

The conversations in which I engaged with Storms can also be understood in these terms: that the memory of his murderous deeds was stored in his brain like data saved to a hard drive, but there was no longer a programme to download this content. That is, due to the current normative framework, there no longer exists a language in which he would have been able to disclose his deeds: despite the accounts he gave, he ultimately had to remain speechless. Perhaps the inability, years later, to speak about this is expressed in Storms' resigned conclusion: 'Young people today are totally different. They think differently, act differently. They don't understand that anymore'.⁷⁹

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Notes

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5. Blatman, *Die Todesmärsche 1944/45*, p. 430.
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8. Walter Manoschek, *'If that's so, then I'm a murderer!'*, DVD documentary, duration 68 min., 2012. The film had its world premiere at the Viennale Film Festival 2012 where it won the Prize of Recognition of the City of Vienna.
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10. Interview by author with Ernő Lazarovits, Budapest, 28 March 2010; Interview with Moshe Zairi (Moritz Klein), Kfar Vradim, Israel 1999, Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), 0.3 V.T/414.
11. Interview by author with Fritz Hagenauer, Loipersdorf, 29 August 2008.
12. Unless otherwise specified, the source of the following information is the Bundesarchiv Berlin, inventory Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt, Alfred Weber's file.
13. Unless otherwise specified, the source of the following information is the transcript of the Austrian *Volksgericht* (People's Court) trial of the HJ-Führer: Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Vg 1g Vr 2059/45.
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20. Interview by author with Kaincz, 27 June 2012.
21. Kaincz estimated that about sixty men were shot and about forty were able to flee before the death march started (Interview by author with Kaincz, 27 June 2012).
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46. Interview by author with Kaincz, 27 June 2012.
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48. Carlos Kölbl and Jürgen Straub, 'Zur Psychologie des Erinnerns', in Christian Gudehus et al. (eds.), *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010), p. 36.
49. Kölbl and Straub, 'Zur Psychologie des Erinnerns', pp. 35–36.
50. Rüdiger Pohl, 'Das autobiographische Gedächtnis', in Gudehus et al., *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung*, p. 82.
51. Hans J. Markowitsch, 'Emotionen, Gedächtnis und das Gehirn', in Harald Welzer and Hans J. Markowitsch (eds.), *Warum Menschen sich erinnern können: Fortschritte in der interdisziplinären Gedächtnisforschung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006), p. 306.
52. Pohl, 'Das autobiographische Gedächtnis', p. 76.
53. Harald Welzer, 'Zum Zusammenhang von Gehirnentwicklung, Lernen und Emotionen', Lecture at the University of Salzburg, 12 July 2005 (manuscript in possession of the author).
54. Interview by author with Storms, 27 June 2012.
55. Letter from Dr Sándor Künztler to Father Johann Farkas, 26 March 1946, published in Harald Strassl and Wolfgang Vosko, 'Das Schicksal ungarisch-jüdischer Zwangsarbeiter am Beispiel des Südostwallbaus 1944/45 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Massenverbrechen bei Rechnitz und Deutsch Schützen' (MA thesis, University of Vienna, 1999), pp. 333–334.
56. Blatman, *Die Todesmärsche 1944/45*, p. 632.
57. Lappin-Eppel, 'Die Rolle der Waffen-SS', pp. 77–112.
58. 'Thus, what we aim to do is to utilize reference framework analysis to take an *amoral* [italicized in the original], that is to say non-normative, look at the violent acts committed during World

- War II.' Harald Welzer, 'Einleitung', in Sönke Neitzel and Christian Gudehus (eds.), *Der Führer war wieder viel zu human, zu gefühlvoll!* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2011), p. 18.
59. On this subject, see the comprehensive array of explanatory approaches collected in Gerhard Paul, 'Von Psychopathen, Technokraten des Terrors und "ganz gewöhnlichen" Deutschen: Die Täter der Shoah im Spiegel der Forschung', in Gerhard Paul (ed.), *Die Täter der Shoah: Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), pp. 13–90.
 60. Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt: Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenburg, 2015), pp. 2468–2760.
 61. Lappin-Eppel, 'Die Rolle der Waffen-SS', pp. 77–112.
 62. Christopher Browning, *Ganz normale Männer: Das Reserve-Polizeibataillon 101 und die "Endlösung" in Polen*, trans. Jürgen Peter Krause (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999), p. 246.
 63. Gerhard Paul, "'Diese Erschiessungen haben mich innerlich gar nicht berührt': Die Kriegsendphasenverbrechen der Gestapo, 1944/45', in Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann (eds.), *Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg: 'Heimatfront' und besetztes Europa* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2000), p. 565.
 64. Blatman, *Die Todesmärsche 1944/45*, p. 657.
 65. Interview by author with Kaincz, 27 June 2012.
 66. Blatman, *Die Todesmärsche 1944/45*, p. 689.
 67. Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund, Adolf Storms' file, deposition of Karl Bundschuh, 18 November 2009, Ontario, Canada.
 68. Michael Mann, *Die dunkle Seite der Moderne: Eine Theorie der ethnischen Säuberung* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007), p. 351.
 69. Frank Bajohr, 'Täterforschung: Ertrag, Probleme und Perspektiven', in Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw (eds.), *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2015), pp. 175–176.
 70. Harald Welzer, *Täter: Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005), pp. 15–16.
 71. Raphael Gross, *Anständig geblieben: Nationalsozialistische Moral* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2010), p. 208. Gross uses the term 'particular morality' since its scope of application is restricted to a specific group, that of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community).
 72. Wolfgang Bialas, *Moralische Ordnungen des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), p. 264.
 73. Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 36.
 74. Gross, *Anständig geblieben*, pp. 210–211.
 75. Blatman, *Die Todesmärsche 1944/45*, pp. 430–435.
 76. Gitta Sereny, *Into that darkness: an examination of conscience* (London: Vintage, 1974).
 77. Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: his battle with truth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).
 78. Günther Anders, *Besuch im Hades: Auschwitz und Breslau 1966. Nach 'Holocaust' 1979* (Munich: Beck, 1996), pp. 185–186.
 79. Interview by author with Storms, 22 September 2008.