Sunday, July 4

Reading material for

“World War II, stages of the War through film excerpts”
WORLD WAR II. The war that engulfed a large part of the earth between 1939 and 1945 involved most of the world’s nations. It began with the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, and ended in Europe with the German surrender on May 7, 1945, and in the Pacific theater with the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945. There are no generally accepted casualty figures. The estimates for Europe run between 30 million and 35 million dead, and perhaps up to 55 million the world over, soldiers and civilians, among whom between 5 and 6 million were Jews who died in the Holocaust.

Background. The economic crisis that began in 1929 and continued in different forms until the outbreak of war critically sharpened the economic and political conflicts in the world. Germany, devastated by the aftereffects of World War I, suffered especially, and this was the main element in the background to the rise of the National Socialist movement there. The aftereffects included the disintegration of the prewar German social structure, the weakness of the liberal and centrist forces that supported a democratic society, and the discomfiture caused by the defeat of 1918, which brought with it the rise of a strident nationalistic response. National Socialism offered a dictatorship—a new style of government with the abolition of parliamentary squabbling—national pride, the struggle for a predominant position in Europe, and, mainly, the pulling together of all levels of society in order to emerge from the economic crisis that in 1932 caused the unemployment of seven million Germans. The assumption of power by the Nazis at the end of January 1933 was viewed with sympathy by the British government, which was worried about the security of its empire in the face of the spread of communism. The Nazis too defined communism as a primary enemy. The French government, while apprehensive about German revanchism, reflected the mood of its population when it assumed a mainly passive stand vis-à-vis the German threat.

In the decade prior to 1939, the Soviet Union, busy with its internal upheavals, at first neglected the Nazi threat altogether and continued its attack on social democracy as well as on the capitalist West. But it changed its policy in 1935 to advocate the establishment of “popular fronts,” uniting antifascist groups, mainly of the Left, while maintaining Communist predominance in them.

In the end, however, it was the desire of the Nazi leadership for a war that proved to be the cause of its outbreak. The Nazi aim was to establish the predominance of the Germanic-Nordic peoples of the “Aryan” race in Europe, and thereby to control, in effect, the world. For that purpose LEBENSRAUM (“living space”) was aspired to in eastern Europe, in line with Nazi ideology as formulated by Adolf HITLER and others. To achieve it, the perceived enemies of Germany—Bolshevik Russia, liberal France, plutocratic America—all of whom were controlled by “international Jewry,” in Nazi eyes, ultimately had to be defeated in a war. War was a desideratum of Nazi ideology both as a means and an end, in the spirit of Social Darwinism: only war would show who was strong and who therefore had the right to rule. In the end, it was not economic, military, or political reasons that instigated the most terrible of wars to date. Economically, by 1938 or 1939, Germany had largely recovered; militarily, it threatened others but was under no danger of attack; and politically, it was already the predominant power in Europe. Nazi Germany wanted a war for ideological reasons. In a memorandum to Hermann GÖRING, instructing him to prepare Germany for war within four years, Hitler wrote in the summer of 1936:

Since the beginning of the French Revolution the world has been drifting with increasing speed toward a new conflict; whose most extreme solution is bolshevism, but whose content and aim is only the removal of those strata of society that gave the leadership to humanity up to the present, and their replacement by international Jewry . . . . Germany has a duty to make its own existence secure by all possible means in the face of this catastrophe and to protect itself against it . . . a victory of bolshevism over Germany would not lead to a Versailles Treaty, but to the final destruction, even the extermination, of the German people.

The ideals of Lebensraum and antisemitism were closely linked, and while no operative plans for a total annihilation of the Jewish people existed before 1941, the germ of
the Holocaust was contained in Nazi ideology, which was the motivating force leading to war.

**Antecedents.** The German army, which even prior to 1933 had circumvented, mainly with Soviet help, the provisions of the Versailles Treaty limiting its size and equipment, began rearming in 1934. In 1935 the industrial Saar area, which had been under French supervision, was regained by Germany through a plebiscite, and in the same year a naval agreement was signed with Britain that enabled Germany to increase its navy. German diplomacy established the Rome-Berlin Axis with Italy in 1936 and 1937 and engineered the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany, Japan, and Italy, directed against the Soviet Union. Germany’s anti-Communist image weakened Western opposition to Nazi expansionism, although Germany, despite its rearmament efforts, was not ready for war before the summer of 1939.

In 1936, the German army entered the demilitarized Rhineland area, which had been under effective French influence, but the French did not react. Austria was annexed, in March 1938 because Italy no longer objected to that step (see ANSCHLUSS), amid acclamation by most Austrians. The annexation of the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the MUNICH CONFERENCE of September 1938 effectively emasculated the power of the Czech army, which had its fortifications there. In March 1939, Czechoslovakia was finally destroyed: Bohemia and Moravia became a German protectorate, Slovakia became an independent state under German tutelage, the Transcarpathian Ukraine was annexed by Hungary, and Memel was annexed from helpless Lithuania. The following month, the Italians occupied hitherto independent Albania.

During the 1930s, the British government tried to deflect German expansionism toward the east. In 1937, when Neville Chamberlain became prime minister, he introduced the policy of appeasement vis-à-vis Germany (see GREAT BRITAIN: APPEASEMENT OF NAZI GERMANY). Until 1938, the Franco-Soviet and Franco-Czechoslovak military pacts were still valid, and they provided for a military balance against the rising German might. The Munich agreement destroyed this balance, and the British policy of directing Germany
toward the east was a central factor in this development. After Munich, war became at least very probable.

The entry of German troops into Prague on March 15, 1939, convinced Chamberlain that his trust in Hitler had been misplaced. Serious preparations for war had been started by Secretary of State for War Leslie Hore-Belisha earlier, and in March 1939 Britain, and a rather reluctant France, issued guarantees of Western support to all the states between Germany and the Soviet Union. British forces, however, were very weak; only 2 or 3 divisions were stationed in the British Isles, and the plan was to increase these to 19 divisions (some 300,000 men). France, on the other hand, relied on the Maginot Line fortifications on its border with Germany, and
was making some rather tentative attempts to extend the fortifications along its border with Belgium. It had, on paper, 110 divisions, of which 85 (some 5 million men) could actually be mobilized within a short time. This force included 5 cavalry and 2 mechanized divisions, and one armored division. There were no strategic plans for offensive operations at all.

Overall Nazi strategy was revealed to the top German leadership on November 5, 1937, when Hitler addressed a meeting of political and military leaders. It was there that the future annexations of Austria and Czechoslovakia were announced and the eastern direction of expansion outlined. In the spring of 1939, pressure was directed against Poland, after some hesitations. The Free City of Danzig (Gdańsk) was demanded by Germany, as well as freedom of movement through the Polish Corridor, which separated the bulk of German territory from East Prussia. Poland, faced by this threat, signed a military pact with France in May. Military and political negotiations among Britain, France, and the Soviet Union (April to August 1939) broke down because of Western unwillingness (and inability) to promise the Soviets real support, and because of the Polish refusal to permit Soviet troops to enter Polish territory to fight against the Germans. Mutual suspicions between the West and the Soviet Union caused Joseph Stalin to turn to the Nazis. Hitler was interested in a rapprochement in order to guarantee the isolation of Poland and to obtain a free hand in the West. In addition, an agreement with the Soviet Union would assure a supply of raw materials essential for the pursuit of war. A neutrality pact, known as the NAZI-SOVET PACT, was signed on August 23, 1939. It provided for the effective partition of Poland, and the inclusion of Lithuania, at a later stage, in the German sphere of influence.

Poland relied on its military strength—thirty first-line divisions and ten reserve divisions, as well as twelve cavalry divisions, for a total of 2.5 million men. However, this force was on paper, for it lacked mobility and armor. On the other side, on paper, stood ninety-eight German divisions, of which fifty-two consisted of first-line troops. Of these, six were armored, four motorized, and another four mechanized divisions. These fourteen divisions made all the difference, and to this was added the control of the skies by the German air force.

Polish Campaign and "Phony War." The Polish army was destroyed within a few days, despite great bravery on the part of many Polish units, and mopping-up operations ended with the surrender of Warsaw on September 28, 1939, after an epic defense. Soviet troops had entered Poland on September 17, and annexed the eastern parts of the country. By an addendum to the neutrality pact (September 28), Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to include Lithuania in the Soviet sphere of influence together with Latvia and Estonia, and some corrections of the demarcation line in Poland were made in German favor. Vilna was "ceded" by the Soviets to Lithuania in October.

Western promises of help to Poland were broken, and the large French army scarcely moved during the Polish campaign. A static warfare with little action on the western front lasted until May 1940, giving Germany the time needed to turn its army into an extremely strong force. By the spring of 1940, 133 Allied divisions—103 French, 9 British, and miscellaneous Belgian, Dutch, and Polish (in exile)—were facing 136 German divisions. The Germans had 10 armored and 7 motorized infantry divisions, as against 6 and 8 Allied divisions, respectively, and 2,700 tanks as against 3,000 Allied ones. The Luftwaffe (the German air force) had a total of 1,050 fighters, 280 dive-bombers, and 1,100 medium bombers, as against 735 Allied fighters, 49 dive-bombers, and 414 medium bombers. In actual fact the Allies had large numbers of additional planes, but for various reasons these remained unused. Qualitatively, German machinery was superior, but the edge was not very large. However, the new military tactics of massed armor accompanied by air superiority, although tested and demonstrated in Poland, were not understood by Western military leaders.

The Communist and fascist elements in the West, each for their own reasons, sabotaged the willingness to fight. This also became clear during the Russo-Finnish War, which
lasted from November 30, 1939, to March 13, 1940. The Soviets aimed at a widening of the security belt north of Leningrad, the annexation of some strategically important islands in the Gulf of Finland, and access to the northern port of Petsamo. Some 330,000 Finns succeeded in holding out against a force of 450,000 Soviet soldiers for three months, inflicting heavy defeats on the Soviets. A reorganization in the Soviet command, combined with massive Soviet reinforcements, broke the resistance of the Finns. Finland, however, remained an independent state.

The Western powers viewed the Soviet Union as an ally of Germany and tried to help the Finns, but failed. In December 1939, the Soviet Union was excluded from the League of Nations. Germany made peace overtures to the West at the time, and the prospect of a Western crusade against the Soviet Union appeared a possibility.

**Invasion of Denmark and Norway.** Western warfare against Germany was mainly economic. The British fleet (under Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty from September 1939 until May 1940) tried to blockade Germany and decided to prevent the shipment of Swedish iron ores to Germany via the Norwegian port of Narvik under the protection of Norwegian neutrality. On April 7, 1940, the British announced that they would mine Norwegian waters, and a British invasion of Norway seemed possible. The Germans were preparing an invasion of their own, and they invaded Denmark and Norway on April 9. Despite heavy Norwegian resistance (the Danes had no real army), which cost the Germans three heavy cruisers and other losses, Norway was conquered in a few weeks, although Narvik continued to be held by the Allies until June 10.

**Campaign in the West.** While the Scandinavian operation was still proceeding, the Germans attacked in the west (May 10), with an improved version of the Schlieffen Plan of 1914. They approached France with a wide sweep through the Netherlands and Belgium, ignoring these countries' neutrality. Using a new tactic, the **Blitzkrieg** (lightning war), in which armored divisions moved into enemy territory quickly and powerfully, they conquered the Netherlands in five days, after devastating bombing attacks and the sur-
prise capture of the sluices, some with the help of Dutch collaborators. Western strategists decided to have their armies meet the Germans in Belgium. The Allied forces were outflanked by a surprise move through the Ardennes that brought the Germans behind the Allied armies. The Germans reached the Channel coast, and the surrounded Allied forces fought a losing battle against overwhelming odds. Belgium capitulated on May 28. Under the protection of the Royal Air Force (RAF), the British troops, with some French and Belgians (a total of some 350,000), managed to escape from Dunkerque in about ten days (May 26 to June 4) with the help of British civilian craft, leaving their equipment behind. The decision of Hitler not to use all available forces to destroy and capture the British force, and his subsequent decision not to invade Britain immediately, saved the British from total defeat. Meanwhile, Chamberlain had resigned on May 10, and Churchill became prime minister.

Faced with the loss of a large army, with German air superiority, and with a concentration of highly mobile German armor and artillery units, the French retreated. Paris fell on June 14, and a new government under the aged Marshal Philippe Pétain was set up to negotiate a French surrender. Italy had joined the war on June 10, and though its troops made no headway on the border with France, it became a co-victor with Germany. On June 22, 1940, an armistice was signed with Germany, and on June 24 with Italy. Most of the French military equipment was handed over to the Germans, and most of the French navy was locked up at Toulon; France was divided into a northern zone occupied by the Germans, and a smaller southern zone under French administration. The new capital was Vichy. French colonies were ordered to desist from cooperating with the British. British attempts to convince the French generals to continue the struggle proved futile, except in the case of Charles de Gaulle, who established the Free French forces from London. French naval forces at Oran, Algeria, were attacked by the British to prevent their falling into German hands; other French naval forces outside of Europe were put under British control.

**Battle of Britain.** In July and August 1940, Britain was practically defenseless: it had eight partly equipped divisions and another fifteen that were just beginning to train. No armor was available. Originally, the Germans planned to invade Britain on September 15, but the date was postponed again and again because of mounting difficulties. Ships bringing food to Britain were attacked, but enough food got through. The Luftwaffe was sent to soften up Britain for the invasion. The RAF had 2,913 aircraft; the Germans, 4,549. In practice, between 550 and 650 British Hurricanes and Spitfires, equipped with an increasingly efficient radar system, had to deal with some 1,700 German aircraft, of which 864 were bombers. The German ME 109 fighters, matching the Spitfires, had a limited range that just barely included London. As the Luftwaffe encountered more difficulties, Hitler postponed the invasion date. In the end, it could not overcome the RAF, and without that no invasion was possible. Between July and the end of October, the Germans lost 1,722 planes as against 915 British fighters lost.

**The Baltic States and the Balkans.** On June 15, 1940, Soviet troops entered Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and over the course of the following two months put an end to these countries' independence. On June 28, the Soviets occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina after giving an ultimatum to Romania, with the Germans passive in both cases. The Soviet Union believed that it was now in a much better position vis-à-vis Germany than previously.

In the meantime, Germany continued to penetrate the Balkans. Germany's arbitration between Hungary and Romania in August 1940 awarded northern Transylvania to Hungary. It also resulted in the demise of the royal Romanian government of Carol II and the emergence of the authoritarian government of Ion Antonescu, who ruled in a coalition with the fascist Iron Guard until January 1941, when he rid himself of them. Both Romania and Hungary were now firmly under German influence. Italy, not to be outdone, plunged into an adventure in October when it attacked Greece from Albania, but it could make no headway; the small Greek
army even penetrated into Albania early in 1941.

In November 1940, Germany tried to reach an arrangement with the Soviets. The Russian foreign minister, Viacheslav Molotov, on a visit to Berlin, agreed in principle to a pact between Germany, Japan, Italy, and the Soviet Union. But faced with Hitler’s suggestion to turn toward India, he demanded German agreement to a declaration of Finland, Bulgaria, Iran, and the Dardanelles as Soviet spheres of influence. This finally turned Hitler against the Soviets. He had been planning an attack on the Soviet Union since September, and this meant that the Balkan flank had to be secured first, and his Italian allies bailed out of Greece. Romania and Bulgaria joined the Axis early in 1941, but in Yugoslavia, which had signed a similar agreement, the government was toppled by an anti-German military group under Gen. Dušan Simović. As a result, German plans were changed, and on April 6 they invaded Yugoslavia and Greece, where a British force landed to help the Greek army. In a lightning advance, Yugoslavia was defeated and Greece conquered. Out of the 60,000-strong British army, 45,000 were evacuated to Crete (by May 1), but on May 20, 15,000 German paratroopers descended on the island and conquered it, suffering heavy losses in the process. Some 16,000 British troops managed to escape to Egypt.

The Middle East and Africa. The Italians, who controlled Libya, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, hoped to conquer Egypt and the Suez Canal, but in a lightning campaign that started on December 9, 1940, mobile British troops under Gen. Archibald Wavell defeated a much larger Italian force in the Western Desert and occupied Cyrenaica. In early 1941 a British force advanced from southern Sudan into Eritrea and, after conquering the Italian key position at Cherien, occupied Ethiopia by the end of May. It then reinstated Emperor Haile Selassie, who had fled after the Italian conquest of his country in 1935 and 1936. The Italian army surrendered.

In February 1941, Gen. Erwin Rommel arrived in Libya with 35,000 German troops, and in a sudden attack in March defeated the British, whose army had been depleted by a force sent to Greece. German armaments were far superior to those of the British, whom the Germans pushed back to the Egyptian border, leaving only an enclave of British troops in the port of Tobruk, which the Germans were unable to occupy. In November, after Wavell had been relieved by Gen. Claude Auchinleck, a numerically superior British force (85,000 British troops, compared to 55,000 Germans) drove the Germans out of Cyrenaica again, relieving Tobruk.

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, most of the independent and semi-independent states showed marked sympathy for the Axis powers. In Iraq a government under the pro-German Rashid Ali al-Gaylani was in power from March 1940. He was forced by the British to resign in January 1941, but returned to power in a putsch on April 2. The British landed troops at Basra, in accordance with the British-Iraqi treaty, and the Iraqi forces surrounded the British air base at Habbaniya. Small British forces routed the numerically superior Iraqis and occupied Baghdad on May 30, putting a stop to a major anti-Jewish pogrom that had been in progress there. The leader of the Palestinian Arabs, the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who supported Rashid Ali, fled to Berlin with him.

The French protectorates of Syria and Lebanon, were under Vichy control, and Syrian airfields were put at the disposal of German aircraft. Despite a much stronger French force there, the British, aided by a Free French force (and guided by some Palestinian Jewish underground, volunteers), invaded Syria on June 8, 1941, and brought about the surrender of the Vichy forces on July 10.

Invasion of the Soviet Union. Unable to defeat Britain, wary of a possible attack by the Soviet army (the only major land force still left in Europe), and disturbed by Soviet demands in the Balkans, Hitler decided to invade the Soviet Union and on December 18, 1940, gave orders to prepare Operation "Barbarossa." The preparations included a series of commands given in March 1941, one of which was the basis for the so-called Kommissarbefehl, which provided for the murder of all political commissars who were of-
fficers of the Soviet army and then, by extension, of all Soviet officials viewed as bearers of the Communist ideology. Soviet areas were to be economically exploited and despoiled, and the fact that mass death through starvation would result from this policy was taken into account. Hitler had originally intended to deal with Britain first, but now that he planned to attack the Soviet Union he saw the struggle as a war of ideologies (Weltanschauungskrieg), which would be conducted by the Germans not as an ordinary military struggle but as a war of extermination. He saw Bolshevism as a Jewish ideology and the Soviet Union as controlled by Jews; hence the elimination of the Soviet Union became wedded to the annihilation of the Jews.

The date of the attack had to be postponed from mid-May to June 22, 1941, because of the German attack in the Balkans. Some historians have advanced the thesis that this delay saved the Soviet Union from defeat because it did not give the German forces enough time to defeat the Soviets before the winter set in.

The German forces numbered some three million men and included Finnish, Romanian, and Hungarian units, since these countries joined in the attack—Finland and Romania to regain territories lost in 1940, and Hungary to maintain its territorial gains. The Germans had 102 infantry divisions, 14 motorized, one cavalry, and 19 armored divisions with 3,550 tanks. They were initially opposed by two million Soviet soldiers in 88 infantry, 7 cavalry, and 54 tank and armored divisions. German equipment was generally far superior. The Luftwaffe gained air superiority by destroying Soviet airfields early in the fighting. Three main armies, those of Wilhelm von Leeb in the north, Fedor von Bock in the center, and Gerd von Rundstedt in the south, attacked in the directions of Leningrad in the north; Minsk-Smolensk-Moscow in the center, which received predominance in German planning; and Kiev in the south. Although they offered determined resistance in many places, the Soviet troops, unprepared by their political leadership for the battle, were outgunned, outmaneuvered, encircled, and wiped out in their millions, although more millions were being mobilized in the rear and thrown into the fray. In July the Baltic states were overrun, with local populations actively aiding the Germans, but the latter were stopped by the Soviet army before Leningrad. In the south, the Germans conquered Kiev in September. Odessa fell on October 16, and Kharkov on October 24. In November the Crimea was invaded and conquered, and on November 15 the Germans laid siege to Sevastopol, which held out until July 2, 1942.

The main thrust in the center brought the Germans in July 1941 to Minsk, followed by Smolensk. Then, despite stiff Soviet resistance, they conquered Viazma and Briansk in October. Both in the Ukraine and in the Briansk-Viazma region, huge Soviet armies numbering many hundreds of thousands were defeated and most of the soldiers taken prisoner. In November the advance on Moscow continued, but it was stopped at Mozhaisk, some 37 miles (60 km) from Moscow. Advance units actually came within sight of the city. A Soviet counteroffensive started on December 6 with fresh reserve troops and pushed the Germans back, liberating Kalinin on December 16. The Soviet advance caused very large German casualties and confounded all the plans carefully laid in the previous spring, German confidence was shaken.

The Soviet government, although it had been explicitly warned of the forthcoming German attack and its date, had not prepared its forces to meet it. Despite the mutual mistrust between the Soviet Union and the West, Churchill declared his readiness to aid the Soviets. Western policies concerning Nazi Germany were formulated in the Atlantic Charter, conceived and signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Churchill on August 14, 1941, and the Soviet Union then cosigned the declaration. An Anglo-Soviet treaty was signed on July 13, and talks led to the establishment of the United Nations with the United States, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor of December 7, 1941.

In March 1941, the United States Congress had approved the Lend-Lease Act, empowering the president to provide goods and services to nations whose defense was deemed vital to the interests of the United States. The Soviet Union now became the recipient of
massive American Lend-Lease assistance ($1 billion in 1941 and 1942). Aid arrived through the north in naval convoys, and through Iran, which had been occupied in August by a combined Soviet-British invasion.

In late 1941 the Soviet command, which had been hard hit by the Stalinist purges of 1937 and 1938, was revamped. Semyon Timoshenko, commander of the western (central) front, relieved Semyon Budenny in the south. Georgi Zhukov, who had defended Leningrad, moved to the western front and organized the great Soviet counteroffensive in December 1941. This counteroffensive was possible because the Soviets had become convinced that Japan would maintain its neutrality and that it would therefore be safe to remove troops from East Asia.

In the spring of 1942, the Germans began their offensive, which was designed to deal a decisive blow to the Soviet army. Conquering the Don basin, they took Voronezh on July 7 and Rostov on July 24, and reached the outskirts of the crucially important city of Stalingrad; on the Volga River, on August 20. In September they broke out of the Crimean peninsula, took Novorossisk on September 6, and occupied the Caucasian oil fields in October. By mid-September they had penetrated into Stalingrad itself, but the Soviet troops there hung on desperately. However, on November 19, 800,000 Soviet troops with 900 tanks began a pincer attack that closed, on November 23, on twenty-two German divisions with some 300,000 men. In November they attacked at Rzhev in the central sector, and in December near Kharkov. In January 1943, another Soviet offensive relieved the seventeen-month siege of Leningrad. On February 2, the German Sixth Army of Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus at Stalingrad capitulated, with 91,000 survivors. Soviet T-34 tanks, as well as large amounts of Western armaments (3,276 tanks, 2,665 aircraft, and 70,000 tons of fuel), had been the material underpinning of the Soviet successes.

German Rule in Occupied Europe. Nazi ideologists and politicians devised the concept of the "New Order" in Europe under Nazi domination. Ethnic groups defined by Nazi ideology as "subhuman" or "racially worthless," especially the Poles and most other Slavs (with the exception of Slovaks, Croats, and Bulgarians), were treated with great brutality. From late 1941, intellectuals associated with the SS began developing an overall German genocidal plan for the restructuring of eastern Europe called GENERALPLAN OST. Its different versions provided for the selective mass murder of millions, mainly the intellectual elites of the Slavic nations; the resettlement of others; the "Germanization" of many; and the enslavement of the rest. The plans included massive resettlement of Germans as the controlling minority in eastern Europe.

German policy in Poland was radically genocidal, aiming at the elimination of the Polish nation as such; the disappearance of its educational, religious, and economic base; mass expulsion from strategic areas; and massive enslavement. As a result, it is estimated that more than three million ethnic Poles died during the war. Similar policies were pursued in the Ukraine, in Belorussia, and on Russian ethnic territory, as well as in Serbia. In some of these areas, especially the Ukraine and the Baltic republics, large segments of the population at first welcomed the Germans as liberators from Soviet rule, and supported the annihilation policy followed against the Jews. However, German brutality slowly brought about a change in attitude. Some of Germany's allies, especially the Croat fascist USTAŠA regime under Ante Pavelić, engaged in parallel policies; in Croatia, some 800,000 Serbs and 90,000 GYPSIES, in addition to the Jews, were murdered by the fascist militia.

The German armed forces did not follow the prewar conventions, such as the Geneva Convention, in their treatment of Soviet PRISONERS OF WAR (POWs). The formal claim was that the Soviet Union had never signed these conventions. In fact, a decision was taken by the Nazi ideologists to use the Soviet POWs as slaves and to kill most of them by starvation, overwork, or both. According to accepted figures, about 3.3 million Soviet POWs perished in this way during the war.

In the West, far milder policies were followed. French, Belgian, and Dutch POWs were at first used, in accordance with international law, as working forces. Later, local labor forces were recruited, either in agree-
ment with local collaborators (as in France, in February 1943) or by force, to work in German industries and in agriculture. "Germanic" countries (the Netherlands and Switzerland) were ultimately slated to become parts of Germany, as were Bohemia and Moravia. Other areas, especially France, were to be kept as satellite countries with a measure of internal autonomy.

Apart from the Jews, it is probable that the Nazis intended to annihilate totally the Gypsy (Romany) population of Europe, although the evidence is still unclear. Several thousand Gypsies were gassed, together with Jews, at CHELMNO and AUSCHWITZ; others were murdered, especially in Poland and Croatia. Estimates place the number of Gypsies killed at between 250,000 and 400,000, out of a total of 3 million to 5 million European Gypsies. The Gypsies were seen as a "mixed" group of nomads of partially Aryan origin. German scientists argued in favor of annihilating the Gypsy "mixed bloods," and keeping alive the "racially pure" Gypsies, but this policy was not followed everywhere.

The Holocaust should be seen in this context, although with regard to the Jews, the policy was not of selective murder and enslavement but of total physical annihilation of every person with more than two Jewish grandparents. Mass murder began with the special mobile killing units of the REICHSSICHERHEITSHAUPMT (Reich Security Main Office; RSHA)—the four EINSATZGRUPPEN in the Soviet Union—starting in early July 1941. They were joined by police battalions of the ORDNUNGSPOLIZEI and three special SS brigades of the Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS (Command Staff of the Reich Leader of the SS), as well as by some WEHRMACHT (army) units. Together, these forces murdered at least 1.5 million and perhaps up to 2 million Jews by the end of 1942. In the conquered Soviet areas, killings were carried out largely by machine-gunning, except near Minsk, where a gassing installation was set up at MALLY TROSTINETZ. The Jews from the other parts of Europe were killed largely in the gassing installations of CHELMNO, BELZEC, AUSCHWITZ, SOBIBÓR, and TREBLINKA. Hundreds of thousands of others died in the CONCENTRATION CAMPS, among them the camp at MAUTHAUSEN, where people were killed by forced labor. Others died as a result of starvation, disease, and on-the-spot executions (especially the very young, the old, and the sick), or after discovery in hiding places, in all the occupied countries.

While the decision to kill the Soviet Jews must have been taken before the invasion of the Soviet Union, its extension to the rest of Europe is documented in an authorization from Göring to Reinhard HEYDRICH of July 31, 1941. The administrative and technical measures necessary for implementing the entire program previewed in that document were agreed upon at a meeting of top bureaucrats from the different ministries that took place on January 20, 1942, in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee (see WANNSEE CONFERENCE).

As a result of the German wartime policies, resistance movements sprang up throughout Europe. In Poland the main group, the ARMIA KRAJOWA (Home Army), was directed by the London-based POLISH GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE. A smaller, Communist-led armed underground, the GWARDIA LUDOWA, was directed from Moscow. The Armia Krajowa refused to engage in open combat against the Germans until the latter were weakened, and it attempted to fight both against Germany and against a Communist takeover. A Soviet-oriented underground sprang up behind German lines in the occupied Soviet territories. Armed groups fighting against Soviets, and, in some measure, against Germans as well, arose in the Ukraine (the Bandera bands). In Yugoslavia, the Communist-led partisans became a real force engaging large German forces, while a royalist armed force, the CHETNIKS, collaborated to some extent with the Germans and Italians. Politically diverse French underground forces were united in 1943 under de Gaulle, and they prepared to participate actively in the liberation of France. Armed urban guerrillas and partisan movements existed in Greece (on a very large scale), in Italy after the entry of German forces into the country in September 1943, in Scandinavian countries, in Austria, in the Protectorate of BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA and Slovakia, and in the Benelux countries. The first major revolt in a city was the WARSZAWA GHETTO UPRISING, which broke out on April 19, 1943. In addition there were a number of other armed actions in the ghettos of CZĘ.php
STOCHOWA, BIAŁYSTOK, VILNA, KRAKÓW, MIR, LACHWA, TUCHIN, and many other places, and in the Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz-Birkenau camps.

Entry of the United States into the War. Japanese designs to become the predominant power in East Asia were first manifested in 1931 with the invasion of China, which by 1941 had led to the occupation of China’s main cities and most of its industrial and agricultural centers. However, the Chinese Nationalist (Kuo-mintang) government under Chiang Kai-Shek, as well as its Communist adversary under Mao Tse-tung, were offering determined resistance to the Japanese invaders. Britain and France tried to compromise, out of weakness. Japan concluded a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union on April 13, 1941, to free its flank and concentrate on eliminating Western influence in Asia. A carefully prepared surprise attack on the United States naval fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, initiated hostilities. The United States declared war on Japan the following day, and on December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. The weakened American fleet was unable to defend Guam and Wake islands, which fell on December 13 and 20, respectively. The Philippines were invaded in late December and fell in January, the United States forces holding out on the Bataan peninsula and Corregidor until May.

In January, too, the Japanese invaded and conquered the Netherlands East Indies (present-day Indonesia), sinking most of the Allied navy in the Battle of the Java Sea (February 27 to March 1). On December 25 the British in Hong Kong surrendered. The British defeat in Malaya was precipitated by the sinking of the two British battleships, Repulse and The Prince of Wales. Malaya was then overrun, and Singapore fell on February 15. Thailand joined Japan as an ally. However, the Allies, mainly Australians and New Zealanders, checked the Japanese advance in New Guinea; in the indecisive Battle of the Coral Sea (May 7, 1942), some 100,000 tons of Japanese shipping were sunk.

In March 1942, the Japanese conquered Burma and threatened India. However, the British forces managed to halt the Japanese advance. The turning point in the Pacific came with the American naval victory in the Battle of Midway (June 4 to 7), which put an end to Japanese dreams of defeating the United States. The tide began to turn against the Japanese, and American troops landed on the Solomon Islands in August. In November, a Japanese fleet was defeated there, while the Battle of Guadalcanal took the lives of large numbers of Americans and Japanese. In 1943, American and British Commonwealth troops began the slow reconquest of the Pacific islands and invaded Burma, where British general Charles Orde Wingate’s commando troops harried the Japanese. Allied soldiers taken as POWs, as well as interned Allied civilians, were treated with extreme brutality by the Japanese, who also carried out medical experiments on Chinese prisoners in Manchuria. In Malaya and elsewhere, thousands of internees and prisoners died of starvation and maltreatment. There, too, the treatment was based on racism, in this case an anti-Western and anti-Chinese ideology.

El Alamein and North Africa. In Cyrenaica, inferior armor caused General Auchinleck’s forces to yield ground to a new German offensive that started in January 1942. In June, Tobruk, with a garrison of 30,000, fell to Rommel’s army. Only in July were the German tanks stopped, at El Alamein, about 60 miles (96 km) from Alexandria. With greater reserves in troops, armor, and fuel, Rommel would probably have taken Egypt, the Suez Canal, and Palestine. However, the Mediterranean was a secondary theater of war for the Germans. Under the overall command of Sir Harold Alexander, the Eighth Army under Gen. Bernard Montgomery, with greatly improved tanks and more guns, began its major attack on October 23, 1942. By November 4, Rommel’s army was in full retreat, which continued until it reached the Tunisian border in late January 1943. Between January 17 and 27, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Casablanca and took the decision not to end the war without unconditional German surrender.

On November 8, 1942, Anglo-American troops invaded North Africa, held by pro-Vichy French forces; 850 ships under Gen. Dwight D. EISENHOWER brought units that took over Algeria and Morocco, in some places against stiff French resistance. Algiers
was occupied by a local anti-Nazi detachment largely composed of and commanded by local Jews. Adm. François Darlan, a French pro-Nazi collaborator, who happened to be in Algiers, arranged for a French surrender. He was assassinated on December 24, and a compromise French administration, which kept the anti-Jewish Vichy laws intact for some months, was set up by Gen. Henri Giraud. In stages, control was taken over by de Gaulle’s supporters.

The Anglo-American forces advanced on Tunis, where the Germans and Italians managed to organize defensive positions. After bitter fighting, the Axis forces surrendered on May 12, 1943. An estimated 950,000 Axis troops were killed or captured, and 8,000 planes and 2.4 million tons of shipping were lost.

That July, the Anglo-Americans under Eisenhower invaded Sicily, leading on July 25 to the resignation of Benito Mussolini and the establishment in Italy of the military government of Marshal Pietro Badoglio. Badoglio sued for an armistice, the Allies invaded Italy on September 2, and Italy surrendered on September 8. However, in a daring coup, a German commando freed Mussolini from detention, and a Fascist government was set up in northern Italy that claimed to be carrying on the war at the side of Germany. Since this government had no power, German troops invaded Italy and raced southward to face the Allies. Stubborn German resistance, especially at Monte Cassino, was overcome only in 1944. Rome fell on June 4 and Florence was liberated on August 12, but German troops held northern Italy until May 45.

The Battle of the Atlantic. In 1939, the merchant shipping of the countries of the military government of Marshall Pietro Badoglio amounted to about 43 million tons, as against 13 million tons owned by Germany, Italy, and Japan. Between 35 million and 40 million tons of shipping were sunk in World War II.

At the outbreak of the war, Germany had fifty-six submarines, one fewer than the British. While the German surface navy never managed to become a deadly threat (although it attracted much of Britain’s naval efforts), the submarine threat to Britain’s supplies from the Western Hemisphere was real enough. By the end of 1939, 114 ships—more than 420,000 tons—had been sunk by German U-boats. In early 1940 British destroyers seemed capable of containing the German threat, but with the fall of France and with air bases in southern Norway available to the Germans, their long-range bombers (the Focke-Wulf 200) could sink ships approaching Ireland and Scotland. The U-boat menace increased again, and in October 1940, 63 ships (350,000 tons) were sunk. In September the United States had agreed to hand over 50 American destroyers to the British, in exchange for the lease of British bases on the American side of the Atlantic. By February 1941, there were only twenty-one German U-boats left, out of fifty-six in the previous summer, but German building programs were speeded up. In the following month, surface attacks, air strikes, and the U-boats accounted for the destruction of 139 Allied ships, with over half a million tons. The rates of sinking continued to be very high, but with the approval of the Lend-Lease Act in March, American warships now patrolled part of the sea route to Britain, thus relieving the hard-pressed Royal Navy. Canadian warships also helped a great deal. However, as new U-boats appeared faster than the rate of sinking, the threat to Britain’s lifeline increased. In 1942, 7,790,000 tons of Allied shipping were lost, most of it to U-boats, and only seven million tons’ worth of new ships came into service. At this rate, Britain might well have been defeated. The peak of the German successes came in March 1943, but by May, German losses had reached about one-third of the U-boat strength, as a result of improved Allied naval tactics and better equipment. The Germans withdrew the U-boats from the Atlantic. In the summer of 1943, the bulk of the German U-boats were sunk by Allied forces. After that, while the threat remained, it was contained.

Soviet Victory. While continuing to press the western Allies for an invasion of the European continent in order to create a second front, the Soviets carried on their advance in early 1943, driving the Germans out of the Caucasus and liberating most of the Ukraine. This took place despite a German counteroffensive in March leading to the reoccupation
of Kharkov, which had been taken by the Soviets in February. On July 5, the German armies opened up a massive tank attack in the Kursk area, but they were contained and then defeated in a tremendous Soviet push westward. The Kursk tank battle was the last German attempt to take the offensive on the eastern front. Advancing steadily against stubborn German resistance, the Soviets reached the prewar Polish border in February 1944. In their spring offensive they liberated Poland as far as the Vistula River, and in their advance southward they caused the Romanian king to stage a palace revolution; depose the pro-Nazi dictator, Ion Antonescu; surrender to the Allies; and join the fight against Germany, on August 23. On September 5 the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria; Bulgaria surrendered, and Sofia was occupied on September 16.

The Soviet forces were aided by the development of partisan units behind the German front, mainly on occupied Soviet territory, and to a lesser degree in Poland and Slovakia. Originally, scattered groups of Soviet soldiers behind German lines had attempted to maintain themselves, but they were mostly wiped out by German troops and local pro-German inhabitants. However, Communist cadres, as well as Soviet POWs fleeing from German camps and Jews escaping from ghettos, formed the foundations of permanent partisan units. There was little direction from the unoccupied parts of the Soviet Union at first, but it was reorganized in May 1942, mainly for the forested region of Belorussia, under Panteleimon Ponomarenko. Trained Soviet troops were parachuted or infiltrated, most of them through the swamps of the so-called Briansk gap. Gradually, local inhabitants joined them, having experienced German brutality. By the spring of 1944, according to official estimates, some 400,000 pro-Soviet PARTISANS were operating behind German lines. While the measure of actual damage to the German war effort is disputed; substantial German forces were required to fight the partisans, and the insecurity behind the lines was a morale factor of significance. Railway and telephone lines were destroyed, and the local population was won over to the Soviet side. Jews, who had been one of the main recruiting sources at first, despite prevalent antisemitism among the partisans.
Maj. Gen. Ivan Susloparov presenting Soviet awards to British Royal Air Force men. The latter were parachuted into Yugoslavia as part of a British mission establishing contact with the partisans and later linking up with the Soviets.

themselves, largely fell victim to the German antipartisan offensives in 1942 and 1943. Out of as many as forty thousand Jews in the forests, only a fraction survived.

Jews were also members of partisan units in Poland, although almost solely in the pro-Communist underground; the mainstream Armia Krajowa refused to accept Jews, and the right-wing underground, which joined the Armia Krajowa in 1943, killed any Jews it found. In Slovakia, a national uprising (see SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING) took place in late August 1944, led by a coalition of pro-Western and Communist forces. Probably some two thousand Jews took part in this uprising, which was defeated by German forces in October.

In Yugoslavia, the Communist partisans under TITO had liberated most of the country (nearly five thousand Jews were members of these forces), aided mainly by the British. Together with the Soviets, they liberated Belgrade and the rest of the country in October. German forces managed an orderly retreat from Greece and Yugoslavia.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish government-in-exile in London, under Premier Wladyslaw SIKORSKI, had been established in August 1941. A Polish army under Gen. Wladyslaw Anders had been set up, composed of Polish nationals in the Soviet Union, including a large number of Jews. The relationship was uneasy, however, and the Anders army was allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1942 in order to fight in Italy. Despite rampant antisemitism in the Anders forces, several thousand Jewish soldiers, as well as some of their relatives, managed to leave the Soviet Union at that time.

In 1943, the Germans uncovered mass graves of between eight thousand and ten thousand Polish officers who had been shot in 1940 at KATYN, in the western part of the Soviet Union. The Soviets were accused—rightly, as it turned out—of responsibility for this murder. They denied it at the time, and Polish-Soviet relations were severed. A pro-Communist Polish committee was established in the Soviet Union that later developed into a Polish provisional government with its center in Lublin (July 1944), under President Boleslaw Bierut. In 1943 a Polish
army under Soviet command was set up under Gen. Zygmunt Berling, and it participated in the liberation of Poland.

Faced with the attempts of the Hungarian government under Miklós KÁLLAY to arrange for a separate peace with the Allies, German forces invaded Hungary in March 1944 and forced the regent, Miklós HORTHY, to appoint a pro-German government under Dóme SZTŐJAY. Sztójay was removed in August, and Horthy tried to arrange for a surrender of Hungary to the Soviets (October 1944). The Germans arrested him and established a fascist government under Ferenc SZÁLASI, which collaborated with them until the German collapse early in 1945. This was the framework for the destruction of most of Hungarian Jewry.

**Bombardment of Germany and Invasion of France.** Before the war, British air strategy had propounded the theory that the war could be decisively influenced by strategic bombing. However, while the number of bombers produced in Britain was double that of fighters, the Germans had many more bombers than the British in 1940. A change in British military thinking in the late 1930s had led to a larger fighter force, which saved Britain in 1940. British bombing raids on Germany took place at night because of the efficient daytime German air defense and despite the inaccuracy of nighttime bombing. In 1942, while indiscriminate carpet bombing of German cities undoubtedly affected German morale, the British losses were high (up to 5 percent of the participating aircraft), and the three 1,000-bomber raids against Cologne, Essen, and Bremen in May and June did not damage German industry in any significant way. German armaments production increased by 50 percent in 1942. Britain lost 1,014 bombers in that year.

The American air force, technically better equipped, concentrated on daytime bombing of military and industrial targets, while the British continued to devastate German cities. The Ruhr cities were attacked between March and July 1943, and the Hamburg area between July and November, the latter involving 17,000 bomber sorties. On August 17, the rocket experimental station at Peenemünde was raided. Between November 1943 and March 1944 Berlin was the main target. However, this did not defeat Germany. Allied losses were very high (over 5 percent each raid), and German military production kept rising. On February 25, 1944, the Schweinfurt ball-bearing plant was attacked, causing real damage to the German war effort.

The crucial element in permitting the Allies to continue bombing was the development of the long-range (1,500 miles) Mustang fighter, superior to anything the Germans had at the time. The Mustangs became operational in December 1943, and by the end of the war, 14,000 had been produced. In 1943, 200,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Germany, nearly five times as much as in 1942. Yet German armaments production rose by another 50 percent. In 1944 the Allied air forces, now operating from Italy (and later also from France), achieved complete supremacy in the air. Oil refineries were the main American targets, while the British concentrated largely on the German transportation system in France and elsewhere. In late 1944 and early 1945, German production began to flag; parallel to this, blanket attacks against civilian centers were resumed, leading to the mid-February 1945 attack on Dresden, in which close to 100,000 civilians died.

German production had kept growing until late 1944, partly through the dispersal of the armaments industry (such as the attempt to build an oil refinery at Monowitz, part of the Auschwitz camp) and partly by the building of underground factories (such as those at DORA-MITTELBAU). All this was done with the help of slave laborers supplied by the SS, among them many Jews. German rockets (the V1 and V2) were directed at Britain, but they did not achieve any reversal of the situation. Albert SPEER was the engineer of German resilience in the production of arms.

After long preparations, and in the face of considerable technical and logistic difficulties, about 250,000 Allied soldiers went ashore in Normandy on June 6, 1944 (D-Day)—a force that was to grow to 2.2 million men, with 450,000 vehicles and 4 million tons of supplies landed from artificial harbors by late June. Victory was assured by the superiority of the Allied air forces, with some ten thousand planes. They were opposed by fifty-eight German divisions, including ten armored ones. On July 31, American forces
broke through the German defense lines, and the whole of France was liberated by the end of August. However, the Allies were checked in the southern part of the Netherlands, after an unsuccessful paratroop attack at Arnhem on the Rhine in September.

While preparing for a final attack on Germany, the western Allies under Eisenhower were taken by surprise in December 1944 when German forces under von Rundstedt attempted to break through American defense lines in Belgium and repeat their feat of 1940. Again, their armored equipment proved superior to that of the Allies, but with the clearing of the skies, the Allied air force, coupled with the spirited defense put up by the Americans, stopped and then reversed the German advance (the Battle of the Bulge).

The Battle for Germany. German resistance continued until the total Allied victory. There was widespread identification in Germany with the Nazi dictatorship: because of the fear of Soviet revenge for what the Germans had done in the Soviet Union; because of identification with the Nazi ideology; because of the Nazi terror machine; because of the lack of a viable political or military alternative; and because the Allied policy of unconditional surrender—appeared to leave no other option. A group of rightist officers, supported by a coalition of largely conservative politicians, plotted to assassinate Hitler and establish a military government that would negotiate with the western Allies. However, the attempt on Hitler’s life by Count Claus von Stauffenberg (July 20, 1944) failed, and the conspirators were caught and executed.

Final victory was assured not only by the overwhelming power of the Allied land forces, but by their control of the skies, despite the development of superior German jet planes (the ME 262). Had the war lasted longer, the Allied air superiority would have been seriously challenged. As it was, more than one thousand German planes were destroyed in January and February 1945, out of a total of fifty thousand German planes lost throughout the war.

First Cairo Conference, November 22 to 26, 1943. Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt discussed the Normandy invasion, and with Chiang Kai-shek they issued a declaration on the status of territories conquered by Japan. Seated, in front: Chiang Kai-shek, Roosevelt, and Churchill.
A rebellion led by the Polish underground broke out in Warsaw on August 1, 1944, while the Soviet army was camped on the other side of the Vistula River. The Poles hoped to stake a claim for their postwar independence, but the Soviets refused to help them. Western efforts to supply arms to the rebels were futile, and they had to surrender on October 2, having sustained heavy losses and with Warsaw in ruins.

On January 12, 1945, the Soviets began a powerful offensive, taking Warsaw five days later. It brought them onto German territory by March. Budapest was liberated in January and February, and Vienna was taken in early April. The stubborn German defense of lost positions on Hitler’s orders meant that their losses were multiplied against all military logic. On March 7 the Americans finally crossed the Rhine, and in April the Allies, from west and east, made their way through Germany. In the process, they discovered and liberated the concentration camps, beginning with Auschwitz in January (by the Soviets), and then BERGEN-BELSEN (April 14, by the British), BUCHENWALD (April 11, by the Americans), and others. Hundreds of thousands of concentration camp inmates who had been marched through Germany at the last moment, with awesome loss of life (at least 250,000 Jews, if not more, died in this way), were liberated during these last days of the Reich. Adolf Hitler, in his fortified bunker in Berlin, committed suicide on April 29; his testament centered on his antisemitic phobia, and he demanded of the Germans that they fight “international Jewry” in the future. Mussolini was shot by Italian anti-Fascist partisans on April 28. Soviet forces conquered Berlin in early May, and the Germans surrendered on May 7. May 8 was proclaimed as the day of victory (VE Day).

End of the War in the Pacific. Allied forces under Gen. Douglas MacArthur, advancing from one chain of Pacific islands to another, slowly gained naval and air supremacy. In October 1944 American forces began the liberation of the Philippines, and in a naval battle taking place from October 23 to 26, they sank a large part of the Japanese fleet. Air raids on the Japanese islands started in November, while British forces began the reconquest of Burma. In February and March 1945, the Americans suffered many casualties during the conquest of the island of Iwo Jima, 750 miles (1,207 km) from Yokohama. On April 1, Okinawa was invaded, and another Japanese fleet was destroyed, despite a new tactic of suicidal Japanese air raids by kamikaze pilots. The struggle for Okinawa lasted until June, again with large American casualties.

On August 6, the first atomic bomb was dropped, on Hiroshima. More than eighty thousand people were killed immediately, and many more died later of the aftereffects of radiation. Three days later, another bomb was dropped, on Nagasaki. On August 8, the Soviet Union joined the war against Japan in order to gain some disputed territories. Faced with the prospect of the mass destruction of the Japanese people, Emperor Hirohito intervened and ordered his generals to surrender. The surrender terms were accepted on August 14, and on August 26, American occupation forces under MacArthur landed in Japan. The formal surrender to the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union was signed on September 2, and the surrender to the Chinese, on September 9.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Yehuda Bauer

WRB. See War Refugee Board.

WROCŁAW. See Breslau.

WURM, THEOPHIL (1868—1953), Evangelical theologian who was appointed bishop of Württemberg in 1933. At the time of the Nazi rise to power, Wurm supported the German Christians (Deutsche Christen), a faction that supported the Nazis. Late in 1933, however, when the Nazis wanted to enforce the Gleichschaltung (coordination under Nazism) law—that is, to subject the church institutions to Nazi ideology and organization—Wurm went into the opposition. He joined the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche) and violently opposed the appointment of Ludwig Müller as Reich bishop of the Evangelical Church (Evangelische Kirche), an appointment made to ensure support of the Nazis by the Protestant church and opposition to the Confessing Church. Because of his position, Wurm was placed under house arrest in 1934. Following a public protest, Wurm, like Bernhard LICHTENBERG and Clemens August Graf von GALEN, violently attacked the EUTHANASIA PROGRAM and the persecution of the Jews.

After the war, in 1945, Wurm was chairman of the Evangelical Church Council in Germany and one of the authors of the "Stuttgart Confession," which acknowledged that church clergy had not done enough in the struggle against the Nazis.

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Zvi Bachrach

WVHA. See Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt.