

Racist Limitations on Violence: The Nazi Occupation of Denmark

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Wars between people of Nordic race are in conflict with the Nordic mission.
-Article Twenty of *The Creed of the Nordic Race*¹

Introduction: Argument & Historiography

At the start of June 1941, the German military prepared for Operation Barbarossa, the planned invasion of the Soviet Union. Around three million troops mobilized for an attack that would become a perceived racial war of annihilation.² But on 5 June 1941, the Germans also prepared for another contest. This challenge took place not on the fields of Eastern Europe but on a football pitch in Denmark. The Germans had invaded Denmark the previous year, and yet they still encouraged a backyard athletic rivalry to propagate an image of cultural cooperation. This attempt to display a friendly rivalry did not play out as the Germans had planned. The German fans expressed their team loyalty by extending their arms and screaming Heil Hitler, and the Danish crowd protested by starting a brawl, prompting Danish policemen to arrest fifty of their own citizens.³ The German occupiers then demanded that a German Police Superintendent replace the Danish Minister of Justice. Instead, the Danish government appointed the Danish National Police Chief, and the Germans accepted the Danish decision.⁴

Some scholars have maintained that the Nazi race war began with the commencement of Operation Barbarossa seventeen days after that very football match. According to such argumentation, the Second World War before Barbarossa was not a racialized one, but rather, it was a “conventional war ... a European war, involving more or less the same powers that had fought the last time around.”⁵ One historian even claimed that Europe from 1914 until the 1940 fall of France was enmeshed in one continuous conflict, a “a twenty-five, rather than a thirty-years war.” This argumentation is more convenient than it is accurate.⁶ The Second World War was racialized both before and after Barbarossa because Nazism was inherently racist. Yet, in the Danish context, the occupied Danes were supposedly a northern racial variant of the occupying Germans, creating a puzzling dilemma. By invading Denmark on 9 April 1940, the

¹ Wilhelm Kusserow, “Article XX,” in *Das Nordische Artbekenntnis* (Berlin: Verlag Struppe und Winkler), 28, cited in Wilhelm Kusserow, *The Creed of the Nordic Race* (London: Friends of Europe, 1936), 18.

² Richard Bessel, *Nazism and War* (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 112.

³ Sten Gudme, *Denmark: Hitler's “Model Protectorate,”* trans. Jan Noble (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd, 1942), 67.

⁴ Gudme, *Hitler's “Model Protectorate,”* 67-68.

⁵ Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 94.

⁶ Michael Howard, “A Thirty Years’ War? The Two World Wars in Historical Perspective: The Prothero Lecture,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 3 (1993): 181-183, 184 (for direct quotation), <http://www.jst.org.stable.3679140>; Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 94-95, 107.

Nazi High Command occupied a country inhabited by perceived racial peers, as defined by Nazism's own racial ideology. The High Command trapped itself in the paradox of consolidating its idolized Nordic race through force. This paradox pitted Nazi racial theory against Germany's northern security concerns, and the Nazis concocted the euphemistic label of "occupied neutrality" to cover their violation of Danish sovereignty.⁷ This linguistic contortion encapsulated the paradoxical nature of the Nazi invasion.

In order to grapple with this Danish conundrum, the occupiers demonstrated an obsession with propagating racial-cultural collaboration. The Nazi attempt to come to terms with the Danish contradiction manifested itself throughout the occupation in cultural, political, and military projects. All of these projects were meant to construct at least a façade of cooperation that would verify Nazi racial solidarity. Ironically, these projects served as self-imposed limitations on the violence that the Germans could employ. Furthermore, since the Danes generally rejected Nazi appeals to Nordic solidarity, this paradox threatened to undermine the Nazi racial paradigm. To be sure, geostrategic military concerns caused the Nazi military to invade Denmark.⁸ While the Nazi idealized discourse of the Nordic race may not have driven the attack, the paradox of employing force against fellow Nordics conditioned and complicated the German occupation.⁹

A proper investigation of this topic must situate the occupation of Denmark within the context of German racial discourses concerning the Danish people. The history of these ideas extended long before 9 April 1940, providing the Germans with a repertoire of racial theories to draw upon when occupying their northern neighbor. Namely, the interwar years saw the domination of racial ideas that placed the Danes under a unifying Nordic racial label.¹⁰ The Danish context revealed that Nazi racial perceptions could be idyllically positive in addition to

⁷ Hans Umbreit, "Auf dem Weg zur Kontinentalherrschaft," in *Organisation und Mobilisierung des deutschen Machtbereichs: Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und Personellen Ressourcen 1939-1941*, vol 5/1 of *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1988), 58, cited in Philip Giltner, "In the Friendliest Manner": *German-Danish Economic Cooperation During the Nazi Occupation of 1940-1945* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1998), 3.

⁸ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 113-121.

⁹ Alon Confino explains the Holocaust by examining a paradox inherent within Nazism; by trying to create something new, Nazism was obsessed with purging the past. He claims that Judaism was viewed as the past, which had to be cleansed for Nazism to move forward. To Confino, the Nazi attempt to deal with this paradox drove forward the violence of the Holocaust. By focusing on a paradox, my argument follows a similar model, but it does so within the context of the occupation of Denmark. See Alon Confino, *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 1-24.

¹⁰ Hans F. K. Günther, "Chapter I: Remarks on the Term 'Race,' On the Determination of Five European Races, and On Skull Measurement," in *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. G. C. Wheeler (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1927) [1926], online by Karl Earlson and Arthur Kemp, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://www.theapricity.com/earlson/rech/reochchap1.htm>; Werner May, "The German National Catechism" (Breslau: Verlag von Heinrich Handel, 1934), 22-26, from *German Propaganda Archive* (Calvin Minds in the Making), online by Robert Bytwerk, 2003, accessed March 5, 2015, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>; Steffen Werther, "'Nordic-Germanic' Dreams and National Realities: A Case Study of the Danish Region of Sønderjylland, 1933-1945," in *Racial Science in Hitler's New Europe, 1938-1945*, ed. Anton Weiss-Wendt and Rory Yeomans (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 131-132, 146.

being virulently negative.¹¹ Furthermore, studying the Nazi occupation of Denmark reveals a way to access Nazi ideology from a different angle. Despite Germany's crushing military defeat on the Eastern Front, that theater marked a success for Nazi racial ideology. Its brutality seemed to vindicate the Nazi prophecy of an existential showdown between the exalted "Aryan" and the dehumanized "Slav."¹² Alternatively, Denmark provided the opportunity for the Nazis to construct their theorized Nordic solidarity, but the overall Danish rejection of the Nazi racial paradigm marked a challenge to Nazi ideology and prompted a German obsession with trying to prove their ideology true. Despite Germany's immediately successful invasion of Denmark, the Danish theater ultimately discredited the Nazi ideological belief in Nordic cooperation.¹³

Regarding racial ideology, this paper draws on Barbara J. Fields, who adroitly asserted that race was inherently "an abstraction" devoid of any existence, simply "an ideological and therefore historical product."¹⁴ However, Nazism's racist perceptions did cause violent actions.¹⁵ This paper also brings in Bernd Wegner's take on Nazi racial ideology. He argued that the Nazis tried to construct racial categories based on supposedly shared biological, cultural, temporal, and spatial qualities. It is important to clarify that Nazi racial thinkers could emphasize and combine these four factors in a variety of ways and to various extents over time in order to prove race as indisputably real and ever present.¹⁶

While strong on ideology, Wegner's text mostly ignores the Danish context.¹⁷ Interestingly, the existing literature on the Danish occupation has the opposite problem.¹⁸ It acknowledges this racial idolization without discussing exactly what that process

¹¹ To be sure, studies of the Eastern Front have been critical to understanding racism's role in violence. See Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), vii-viii, 3-231.

¹² See Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 93-230.

¹³ Claus Bundgård Christensen, Niels Bo Poulsen, and Peter Scharff Smith conclude that the recruitment projects of the SS in countries like Denmark proved "a success" because the SS "managed to recruit and include around 50,000 men whom they used for all the diverse and ideological purposes for which the military branch of the SS deployed its soldiers and staff." Overall, their article is powerful and well written, but their provocative conclusion accepts any service in the SS as an indication of "success." Their claim sidelines the relatively small recruitment numbers when compared to the manpower demands of total war, and it also ignores the unpopularity of these recruitment drives and the resistance efforts that they engendered. Claus Bundgård Christensen, Niels Bo Poulsen, and Peter Scharff Smith, "Germanic volunteers from northern Europe," in *The Waffen-SS: A European History*, eds. Jochen Böhrer and Robert Gerwarth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 75.

¹⁴ Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York, 1982), 149-150, 151 (for direct quotations).

¹⁵ Or, in the words of Fields, "the embodiment in thought of real social relations." Fields, "Ideology and Race," 151.

¹⁶ Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 20-21. Furthermore, according to Wegner, Nazi ideology interpreted humanity as a racial hierarchy. The corollary to the elevation of certain races was the vilification of other ones. The Nazis found their racial foil in the form of Slavs and Jews, and Wegner demonstrated that, to the Nazis, "Both spheres, the infusion of Nordic blood into their own as well as the destruction of foreign races, were the reverse sides of the same coin." Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 25. His text also pointed to a void in the existing historiography. He admitted to glossing over racial ideology within the context of Germany's Nordic neighbors when he claimed, "A comprehensive analysis of the pan-Germanic policy of the SS ... remains a desideratum to this day." Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 5.

¹⁷ Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 5

¹⁸ Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 5; Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1-3, 170-171.

meant.¹⁹ Given that the majority of Danes dismissed ideological collaboration, such marginalization of the topic makes sense.²⁰ Despite this contribution, the historiography has stalled into the barren consensus that Denmark's relatively relaxed experience was "unique."²¹ Scholars have debated over this issue of being "unique," leaning on supposed Danish ethical exceptionalism or fusing German economic priorities with German apathy toward Denmark.²² Notions of exemplary morality have emerged from the escape of most Danish Jews to Sweden. Such stories build positive national narratives, but they do not necessarily explain the past.²³ Economic historians have invoked German productivity concerns, German apathy, and German appreciation for the Danish acceptance of the ultimatum.²⁴ The emphasis on economics and pragmatism has been more revealing than ethical exceptionalism, but it still has been dismissive of racial ideology.²⁵

More recently, Steffen Werther addressed the question of Nazi racism in the context of the Danish occupation.²⁶ Werther made a strong case for the difference between "*Volk*," with its implications of culture, and "*Rasse*," with its pseudo-biological meaning of race.²⁷ The *SS* hoped to propel the Germans and Danes from the divisiveness of the former into the unity of the latter.²⁸ Although insightful, Werther's arguments have been so focused on the Danish Nazi Party, the *SS*, and the *Waffen-SS*, even though the overall number of people involved with these official organizations was limited. Here, I build on Werther's great contribution by examining Nazi racial thinking that shaped the occupation in general, including regular soldiers, policemen, academics, and the Danish population, in addition to the official organizations such

¹⁹ Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1-3, 170-171.

²⁰ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 52.

²¹ Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1.

²² Leon A. Falik, foreword to *The Rescue of the Danish Jews: Moral Courage Under Stress*, ed. Leo Goldberger (New York: New York University Press, 1987), xiv-xv; Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1 (for direct quotation), 2-11. A more recent example would be Bo Lidegaard, *Countrymen*, trans. Robert Maass (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 348-355. He synthesizes notions of Danish morality with German "practical and opportunistic concerns." Lidegaard, *Countrymen*, 353.

²³ Falik, "Foreword," xiv-xv; Emmy E. Werner, *A Conspiracy of Decency: The Rescue of the Danish Jews During World War II* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002), 5, 170-171.

²⁴ Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1-11.

²⁵ Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 1-11, 170-171; Falik, foreword, xiv-xv. For an argument of both Danish morality and German pragmatism, see Lidegaard, *Countrymen*, 348-355.

²⁶ He claimed that the border issue of North Schleswig drove a wedge between the German minority in Denmark, which hoped to return North Schleswig to Germany, and the Danish Nazi Party, which hoped to maintain the border. Interestingly, the Nazi regime wished to placate the Danes by not pressing the issue of the German-Danish border. Stephen Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities in Danish North Schleswig, 1932-38," in *Bordering the Baltic: Scandinavian Boundary-Drawing Processes, 1900-2000*, ed. Madeleine Hurd (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 69-104; Werther, "Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 129-149. Indeed, the German Nazis hoped their lenient policies would help encourage Denmark to enter into a racially collaborative relationship with its big German brother. Werther, "Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 129-138.

²⁷ Werther, "Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 137.

²⁸ Werther successfully argued that the *SS* pushed for a pan-Nordic contingent of the *Waffen-SS* that would bolster Nordic racial unity, as opposed to creating a separate Danish contingent that would bolster Danish nationalism. Overall, Nazi overtures to Denmark were thus premised on desires to transcend national coordination and achieve racial integration. Werther, "Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 130-144.

as the Danish Nazi Party, the SS, and the *Waffen-SS*.²⁹

In order to complicate narratives that begin with the morning of 9 April 1940, I start by tracing the German and Danish racial perceptions of each other during the prewar context. Then, I demonstrate how the Nazis attempted to translate their racial construction of Danes into policies that conditioned the invasion and occupation of Denmark. In the face of Danish recalcitrance, the German occupiers trod a fine line between propagating symbiotic racial collaboration and satisfying their perceived security needs. In this second part, I draw on the accounts of two Danish expatriates living in England—Sten Gudme and Paul Palmér. Both men were newspaper editors who provided copies of and comments on the German occupation policies. Nationalist biases permeate these texts, for the authors repeatedly cast scorn on German collaborative efforts. Given the overall failure of the German efforts, the patriotic biases of the authors do not discredit the validity of their narratives.³⁰

Prewar Racial Perceptions

In 1922, just two years after the return of North Slesvig from a defeated Germany to Denmark, Hans F. K. Günther published his *Ethnology of the German People*. This treatise marked the ascendance of a racial discourse that homogenized the Danes under the monolithic category of Nordic. Steffen Werther's work rightly focuses on Günther as the main Nordic racial theorist responsible for the Nordic conceptualization during the 1920s.³¹ This thinker published prolifically during this decade, including works such as his 1925 *The Nordic Thought Amongst the Germans* and his 1926 *The Racial Elements of European History*, which divided Europe into Nordic, Mediterranean, Dinaric, Alpine, and East Baltic races.³² While Günther

²⁹ Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities," 69-104; Werther, "'Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 129-149. *The Leader of the Reich SS, SS-Man and the Question of Blood (The Biological Fundamentals and their Corresponding Application for the Preservation and Increase of Nordic Blood)* (SS Main Office and Schooling Office, 1941), 11-16, 59-60. I am indebted to Steffen Werther for providing me with such a fruitful primary source. Leader of the Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening: Letters of Germanic War Volunteers: Letters by Germanic Volunteers of the SS-Division Viking* (Berlin-Leipzig: Nibelungen-Verlag, 1943), 7-8, 40, 60, 69-70. Again, I thank Steffen Werther for providing me with this collection. I have broadened the focus to include civilian sources as well, such as Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 33, 37-38, 52, 67, 81-83. The focus on the *Waffen-SS* does have a long and important historiography, such as Peter Scharff Smith, Niels Bo Poulsen, and Claus Bundgård Christensen, "The Danish Volunteers in the Waffen SS and German Warfare at the Eastern Front," in *Contemporary European History* 8 (1999): 80-96. Their focus on the *SS* comes at the expense of racial theory, which is left unclear. Smith et al., "Danish Volunteers," 84-86, 96. Their emphasis on the *SS* has continued with their 2017 article on *SS* recruitment of Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, and even some British volunteers. In this broader comparative approach, they emphasize the violent actions of these *SS* recruits, the tension between racism and nationalism, and the condescension against Belgian volunteers, who were frequently seen as less racially desirable than recruits from Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands. Christensen, et al., "Germanic volunteers," 59-74. However, their broader focus is still limited to the *SS*, and it also means that a detailed consideration of the "Nordic-Germanic race" and its theories is rather lacking in their article. Christensen et al., "Germanic volunteers," 43 (for direct quotation), 44-45.

³⁰ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 5-165; Paul Palmér, *Denmark in Nazi Chains* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1942), 13-128.

³¹ Werther, "'Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 131-132, 146.

³² Werther, "'Nordic-Germanic' Dreams," 131, 146; Günther, "On the Determination of Five European Races," <http://www.theapricity.com/earlson/rech/reoehchap1.htm>.

was central to constructing the Nordic racial idea, he was not the only racial theorist contributing to this discourse.³³ A much livelier discourse concerning this racial label, a discourse that included both German and Danish voices, can be reconstructed. For example, Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss fused geographic determinism with racism, claiming that Nordic racial qualities of “innate” expansionism emerged from the “Nordic landscape.”³⁴ He invoked the aura of the North Sea as the inspiration for and the means of Nordic exploration. In geographical terms, he constructed a Nordic race distinct from the other supposedly European races: the Mediterranean and Eastern.³⁵

Werner May’s 1934 work, “The German National Catechism,” further complicated Günther’s racial paradigm. Instead of imposing five racial groups onto all of Europe, he imposed six different racial categories onto “our German people.” He maintained Günther’s labels of Nordic, East Baltic, Alpine, and Dinaric, but he took out Mediterranean and added Pfalzish and Western.³⁶ In spite of this small (and absurd) difference, a marked continuity lingered from Günther’s work a decade earlier: Nordic always seemed to be listed first.³⁷ As the title of his work implies, May defined race in cultural, semi-religious terms, where language served as a primary racial identifier. He apotheosized the Danes when he conceded, “With regards to the purity of language, the Scandinavian peoples are in first place,” even above the Germans.³⁸ Denmark received particular praise when May idealizes the Danish people as “the most racially pure of the European peoples,” along with the people from England, Norway, Sweden, and, of course, Germany.³⁹ Repeatedly, within the racial discourse of prewar Nazi Germany, numerous German thinkers seemed to lump the Danes in with other venerated peoples.

By the time of the Nazis, assigning the Danes under the unifying umbrella label of Nordic had won out as the dominant strain of racist thought.⁴⁰ Interestingly, a report by Joachim Joesten in 1937 claimed that Danish people embraced the unifying Nordic racial category. Nevertheless, in a reapplication of racial logic, the Danes saw the Germans as unworthy of this category, as the Germans belonged to a supposedly inferior racial group based

³³ Werther, “‘Nordic-Germanic’ Dreams,” 131, 146; Günther, “On the Determination of Five European Races,” <http://www.theapricity.com/earlson/reeh/reoehchap1.htm>; Clauss, “Racial Soul,” 66.

³⁴ Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, “Racial Soul, Landscape, and World Domination,” in *The Nordic Soul: An Introduction to Racial Psychology, from Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*, by George L. Mosse, trans. Salvator Attanasio (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 67.

³⁵ Clauss, “Racial Soul,” 66-67.

³⁶ May, “German National Catechism” from *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>, (for direct quotation); Günther, “On the Determination of Five European Races,” <http://www.theapricity.com/earlson/reeh/reoehchap1.htm>.

³⁷ Günther, “On the Determination of Five European Races,” <http://www.theapricity.com/earlson/reeh/reoehchap1.htm>; May, “German National Catechism,” from *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>.

³⁸ May, “German National Catechism,” from *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>.

³⁹ May, “German National Catechism,” from *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>.

⁴⁰ May, “German National Catechism,” from *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>; Werther, “‘Nordic-Germanic’ Dreams,” 131-132, 146.

on their more southern homeland and disposition. The Danes appropriated the label of Nordic for themselves, and they hoped their reputation as “democrats” and “pacifists” would emerge as the dominant connotations of this racial label.⁴¹ The definition of the Nordic racial category was clearly up for grabs, and the Danes wanted to stake a claim in the contestation over such racial labels. While the Danish mentality was still racist, it was an ironically racist rejection of Nazi racism.⁴²

It was within the context of this contested Nordic discourse that Wilhelm Kusserow released his work, “The Creed of the Nordic Race.” Originally published in Berlin, an English translation was made available in 1936. This declaration listed the main tenets by which the Nordic race ought to abide at all times. For all that Nazism abhorred Bolshevism, Kusserow’s pamphlet ironically relied heavily on communist tropes, such as his calls for “a Nordic International” and a “consciousness” based on “blood.”⁴³ The purpose of the Nordic Creed was expressed in the Tenth Article, which claimed, “The moral law inherent in us demands the struggle for the preservation, growth and unification of all Nordic races on earth.”⁴⁴ The Twentieth Article then cautioned, “Wars between people of Nordic race are in conflict with the Nordic mission.”⁴⁵ This warning would serve as a haunting premonition of the paradox between the Nazi idea of Nordic solidarity and the German military decision to invade Denmark.

Kusserow’s manifesto emphasizes the need for historians to study the Danish occupation. The violent conflicts with Norway and Holland demonstrate that, when met with resistance, the Nazis chose violence over Nordic aspirations. Denmark’s acceptance of the German invasion ultimatum, however, represented Germany’s best chance to abide by Kusserow’s Twentieth Article.⁴⁶ Indeed, the Germans were obsessed with constructing a sense of collaboration with Denmark. This public relations image of cooperation was a German attempt to come to terms with the paradox of subjugating a racially esteemed people. This façade of coordination was not as feasible in either the Norwegian or the Dutch contexts, given that the official governments fled to England to continue the fight. In the words of Kusserow’s Nineteenth Article, Germany’s relationship with Denmark allowed for the closest attempts at official cooperation between “The States and peoples of Nordic blood, while fully preserving their historic peculiarities.”⁴⁷ This objective would manifest itself in cultural, political, and military projects throughout the occupation of Denmark.

Nazi Racial Ideology & German Occupation Policies

German troops moved into Denmark at 4:30 a.m. on 9 April 1940. At the exact same time, the Danish government received the German diplomatic ultimatum either to accept the

⁴¹ Joachim Joesten, “The Nazis in Scandinavia,” *Foreign Affairs* 4 (1937): 720-721, retrieved January 15, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20028814>.

⁴² Joesten, “Nazis in Scandinavia,” 720-721.

⁴³ Kusserow, “Creed of the Nordic Race,” 7.

⁴⁴ Wilhelm Kusserow, “Article X,” in *Das Nordische Artbekenntnis* (Berlin: Verlag Struppe und Winkler), 21, cited in Kusserow, *Creed of the Nordic Race*, 14.

⁴⁵ Kusserow, “Article XX,” 28, cited in Kusserow, *Creed of the Nordic Race*, 18.

⁴⁶ Kusserow, “Article XX,” 28, cited in Kusserow, *Creed of the Nordic Race*, 18.

⁴⁷ Wilhelm Kusserow, “Article XIX,” in *Das Nordische Artbekenntnis* (Berlin: Verlag Struppe und Winkler), 27, cited in Kusserow, *Creed of the Nordic Race*, 18.

occupation or to fight a war. The Danish authorities agreed to the ultimatum by 6:00 a.m. so as to prevent an escalation of the skirmishes occurring throughout the country.⁴⁸ Because of this Danish acceptance, the Germans offered not “to interfere with Denmark’s territorial integrity or political independence.”⁴⁹ The Danish government—composed of a parliament and a monarch—remained intact.⁵⁰ Juxtaposed with the Nazi government’s offer was the presence of German troops, who had already occupied the interior of Copenhagen by 6:00 a.m. Two thousand troops had been waiting in merchant vessels docked in Copenhagen’s harbor.⁵¹

The invasion guidelines for German soldiers crossing the Danish border showed the extent to which the German leaders wanted notions of race to condition the mentalities of their troops. The instructions given to the *Wehrmacht* troops involved with the Danish invasion involved “seven rules of conduct.” The preface to this list of rules reminded the German soldiers that they have “not set foot on enemy territory” and instead “have advanced into Denmark for the protection of the country and safeguarding of its citizens.” The very first rule brought up the issue of race. It claimed that the inhabitants of Denmark identified with the “Scandinavian race.”⁵²

The exact definition of this label was left unclear, but the *Wehrmacht* policy makers employed it to create a sense of both distance and familiarity between Germans and Danes. The sense of distance came about when the instructions described the Danes as “freedom-loving” rather than attuned to the “military discipline” of Germans troops. The sense of familiarity came about when the instructions told the soldiers to use “a humorous tone” when addressing Danish civilians. The rules even explicitly told the Germans: “don’t shout.” They also commanded respect for private property and the avoidance of “unnecessary severity.” Further moments of mandated politeness included the reminder that “he [the Dane] may be won over by friendliness, small attentions and personal recognition.” While such rules may not have translated exactly into practice, the German High Command’s determination to include detailed instructions for proper behavior demonstrated the dignified treatment Nazism sought to give a race it deemed worthy of respect. The end of this document also showed German anxiety about the paradox of invading a space filled with racial peers. The sixth rule admitted to the *Wehrmacht* that the Danes exhibited “no understanding” of Nazism, but then the seventh rule boasted “The German language is understood by many Danes.”⁵³ The Nazis seemed fully cognizant of the Danish rejection of their ideological program, but they also seemed convinced of the cultural and racial compatibility between Germans and Danes. The Germans recognized the failure of their ideology’s transferability and yet perpetually sought to corroborate its tenets through cooperation. General Kaupisch, who led the invasion, later released a statement to the

⁴⁸ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 14-18.

⁴⁹ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 18.

⁵⁰ Bernd Stegemann, “IV. Securing Germany’s Political and Military Hold on the Occupied Territory,” in *Germany’s Initial Conquests in Europe*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Research Institute for Military History), trans. Dean S. McMurry and Ewald Osers, vol. 2 of *Germany and the Second World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 223.

⁵¹ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 14-18.

⁵² German Supreme Command, “Seven Rules of Conduct,” cited in Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 33.

⁵³ Supreme Command, “Seven Rules,” cited in Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 33.

“North Schleswig Newspaper” in order to bolster this sense of cooperation during the invasion period. He praised the Danes for accepting the invasion ultimatum, which “prevented bloodshed” among “German akin people.”⁵⁴ By explicitly expressing such appreciation to the Danes, he also implicitly condemned the Norwegians for their official resistance that caused senseless slaughter amongst racial peers.

Racial ideology conditioned not just the invasion of Denmark, but its occupation as well. The Germans strove for racial collaboration in order to resolve the paradox of using force to occupy a space of racial peers. The German attempt to use racial cooperation manifested itself in cultural, political, and military collaborative projects, and in all three areas, the Germans essentially failed. To the frustration of the Germans, the Danish rejection of Nazi racial overtures discredited the Nazi racial prophecy of Nordic unity. This rejection both exacerbated the contradiction inherent in occupying a space of perceived racial peers and cast significant doubt on the paradigm of Nordic solidarity. Thus, if the Danish theater represented a swift German military success that took no more than two hours, it ultimately served as a perpetual challenge to Nazi racism. Despite (and because of) repeated failure, the Germans tried repeatedly to construct demonstrations of cooperation.

The occupiers sought to propagate racial unity between Nordic Danes and Germans through cultural organizations within Danish civil society. By August 1940, the Germans had established a “Danish-German Society” that met in Copenhagen.⁵⁵ Intended “to further collaboration ... of a cultural character,” this organization was indicative of German overtures to the Danes.⁵⁶ The occupiers also expended time, energy, and funding on cultural displays. These “exhibitions” in Denmark revolved around literature and the visual and performing arts.⁵⁷ Their main objective was to construct a sense of cultural symbiosis between Denmark and Germany and “to promote the health and good relations of the peoples,” as Paul Palmér noted.⁵⁸ The Germans also courted the world of academia, planning to transfer some German professors to Denmark and Danish professors to Germany. On 4 May 1941, the Germans made Copenhagen the location for a new “German Scientific Institute.”⁵⁹ Its main objective was “Danish-German collaboration in the scientific and cultural spheres.”⁶⁰ While race was not explicitly mentioned in the titles of these groups, the Nazis conceived of race and culture as inextricably linked, with cultural potential determined by supposed racial features.⁶¹ Furthermore, the name of “the *Nordic Society*” did make an explicit appeal to racial collaboration. This organization worked for collaboration amongst Nordic peoples. Fittingly, for a sense of racial collaboration based on shared history, this society was based out of Lübeck, a German city south of the

⁵⁴ General Kaupisch, “General Kaupisch Report on the Occupation,” in *Occupation Documents, Dansk Militærhistorie*, page by Admin, February 10, 2014, accessed February 25, 2015, <http://milhist.dk/dokumenter/enera-l-kau-pisch-beretning-om-besaettelsen/>.

⁵⁵ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 74.

⁵⁶ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 74.

⁵⁷ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 75.

⁵⁸ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 75.

⁵⁹ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 76.

⁶⁰ Comment on the Creation of the “German Scientific Institute,” 4 May 1941, cited in Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 76.

⁶¹ Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 20-21; see Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1-19, 189-230.

Danish border that had been a stronghold of the Hanseatic League.⁶²

For the most part, the Danes rejected these organizations. One year after the formation of the “Danish-German Association,” it shut down because it lacked support.⁶³ Palmér reported that the Danes tended to avoid the “exhibitions” meant to broadcast the cultural symbiosis between Denmark and Germany. The University of Copenhagen declined the offer to have German and Danish professors work side by side.⁶⁴ It also denied the German request to host the inauguration of “The German Academy” established in Denmark.⁶⁵ The repeated Danish rejection of these Nazi projects for cultural cooperation created an awkward situation for the German regime. Each failure highlighted the German need to propagate a collaborative image, so as to reaffirm Nazi racial ideology. Fortunately for the Germans, the failure of these cultural projects did not boil over into publicly disruptive demonstrations. Rather, they tended just to fester away in relative silence.⁶⁶

Still, the football match of 5 June 1941 did spiral into a public display of Danish discontent. This German project to propagate cultural cooperation became an issue of political power when the Danish fans started a protest. Danish police were obliged to arrest the Danish instigators of the *mêlée*, but the Germans sought to meddle with the Danish political system. Danish officials would not accept a German appointee to the position of Justice Minister and instead promoted Thune Jacobsen, the Danish head of police. But the Germans did not renege on the occupation agreement, even though they very well could have. Rather, the occupiers decided to accept the demands of the recalcitrant Danish government.⁶⁷ A harsh crackdown or forced intervention would have sabotaged the cooperative cultural image the Germans had hoped to construct with the soccer match in the first place. The Germans decided to reaffirm their façade of political cooperation over cultural issues. The German “Nord Press Agency” best encapsulated this desire for cultural collaboration in political concerns by claiming, “The appointment of Thune Jacobsen is to be hailed with joy in Germany. His marked interest in the cultural union between Denmark and Germany and in the *Nordische Gesellschaft* are highly appreciated in Germany.”⁶⁸ This quotation revealed just how important a political image of cooperation was to the Germans—they not only respected Danish wishes but also presented these Danish requests in a way that worked with German ideals of racial-cultural cooperation. At times, the Germans diluted their hegemony in a solvent of their own racism.

Other political issues surrounding the occupation further showed the German desire to project a positive public-relations image. The Germans occupiers were obsessed with global perceptions of Danish-German relations, making Danish diplomatic delegations still stationed around the world of central importance. German representatives reviewed correspondence sent from the government in Copenhagen to its representatives in foreign states to make sure official

⁶² Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 78 (for direct quotation); Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 20-21.

⁶³ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 74 (for direct quotation); Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 37.

⁶⁴ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 76.

⁶⁵ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 37 (for direct quotation); Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 76-77.

⁶⁶ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 37.

⁶⁷ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 67-68.

⁶⁸ “Nord Press Agency,” cited in Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 69.

statements reflected a positive relationship between Germany and Denmark.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the German High Command was sure to maintain the Danish government's legal jurisdiction over Danes arrested for criminal activity. This political concession to an occupied subordinate was meant to show "German generosity."⁷⁰ While writing in England, Sten Gudme dismissed this "magnanimity" as a superficial concession to cover German infringements on Danish sovereignty.⁷¹ But the German decision to preserve Danish legal jurisdiction, even if superficial, reflected the attempt to make more palatable the contradiction of having used force to occupy idealized racial neighbors. This German legal decision also marked a self-imposed constraint on German domination—it was a German representative in Denmark who requested amnesty for the Danish policemen arrested for fighting with German troops and Danish Nazis.⁷²

The racial influence on politics was most explicit when "in the spring of 1941, the Danish Nazis opened a so-called 'race political central office,' the task of which was to furnish information about non-Aryan Danish citizens."⁷³ In practice, "non-Aryan Danish citizens" meant the small Jewish population. The office also was in charge of handing out "Aryan certificates" to Danes who wanted to be Danish Nazi Party members. Danes hoping to join the Nazi Party were required to present "Aryan certificates" in their application process.⁷⁴ Thus, this Nazi administrative bureau embodied the two-fold nature of Nazi racism: idolization of supposed racial peers and vilification of perceived racial opposites. Furthermore, the small minority of Danes who did embrace Nazi racism tried to recruit fellow Danes so as to conjure an image of racial collaboration. This paperwork demonstrated the easy translatability between Germans and Danes according to Nazi racial logic. The writers of the Danish Nazi Party's newsletter, *Kamptegnet*, went so far as to reach out to "our German brothers and the genius of leadership of the Germanic race and Hitler with Germanic honour, loyalty and enthusiasm, determined to do anything to instruct the Danish Germanic people about Jewish activities in Denmark and abroad."⁷⁵ Gudme's and Palmér's accounts both reported the unpopularity of this party among the Danish population.⁷⁶ But these political projects for racial collaboration were significant because they were unsuccessful. Their failure demonstrated the German reluctance to let the Danes ruin ideals of Nordic solidarity, and they also showed the German resilience in trying to propagate a cooperative façade.

Politically collaborative projects also bled into military ones. The shift from political to military projects was most apparent with the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Just four days later, Denmark was compelled to sever its diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union in a public display of Danish-German cooperation.⁷⁷ In the announcement, the Danish government repeatedly emphasized the "danger from the East" that "threatened Scandinavian

⁶⁹ Stegemann, "Occupied Territory," 224.

⁷⁰ Danish Minister of Justice, cited in Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 64.

⁷¹ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 64.

⁷² Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 64-65, 67.

⁷³ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 71.

⁷⁴ Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 71.

⁷⁵ "An Introductory Article," *Kamptegnet*, cited in Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 72.

⁷⁶ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 52; Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 72-73.

⁷⁷ Danish Government, "Statement Explaining the Diplomatic Break with Russia," 26 June 1941, cited in Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 56; Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 18-19, 56, 94.

welfare and development.”⁷⁸ This statement explicitly referenced the Soviet invasion of Finland as an attack on “our fighting brothers in the North” and a legitimate threat to “Nordic States” in general.⁷⁹ More significantly, the Danish government expressed its gratitude to Germany for leading the charge of civilization against the Eastern menace. At this point, the official Danish statement made clear that “Denmark does not take part in arms, but the common interest of Europe demands that Denmark should not remain impassive.”⁸⁰ The German occupiers grappled with the Danish paradox by applying just enough pressure to gain official diplomatic support for another supposedly protective military endeavor.

While I have made a case for focusing on theaters other than just the Eastern Front, a study of Nazi ideology in Denmark must still address the impact of Operation Barbarossa on the German racial project. The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union was supposed to be a pan-Germanic crusade against the Bolshevism of Slavs and Jews, and if the official Danish state would not get troops involved, then the Germans had to find other ways of acquiring Danish military assistance without alienating their racial peers.⁸¹ The racially driven *SS* offered a solution to resolve the paradox between military priorities and racial ideals. Its apparatus and its plans represented the ultimate fusion of Nazi racism and military objectives.⁸² These plans led to the enlistment of Danish men to fight against the supposed Eastern challenge to Western civilization.⁸³ Thus, the invasion of the Soviet Union offered the best chance for the Nazis to reconcile the paradox between racial solidarity and perceived military needs.

An education manual for *SS* trainees from 1941 demonstrated the Nazi use of race to build collaboration with the Danes. It was entitled *SS-Man and the Question of Blood*. In this pamphlet, *SS* racial theorists expressed German claims for solidarity with Denmark through cartography, which labeled Denmark as “The Core Area of the Nordic Race.”⁸⁴ Indeed, another map of “The Settlement of the Nordic Indo-Germans from 3000 to 1800 BC” depicted Denmark as the epicenter of a supposed Nordic Diaspora throughout Europe.⁸⁵ The *SS* theorists of this booklet further sang Danish racial praise in commenting that “the main range of the Nordic race lies in the North and Baltic Sea, North Germany, Denmark, Scandinavia, England and Holland.” The *SS* manual expressed gratitude to the Nordic race for its constructive influence on the Germanic gene pool. Once again, as in the interwar racial discourse, these Nazi racial theorists divided the German people into numerous racial categories, and once again they listed the “Nordische Rasse” first.⁸⁶

These racial claims were meant to muster Danish support for *SS* during the war.⁸⁷ In

⁷⁸ Danish Government, “Diplomatic Break with Russia,” 26 June 1941, cited in Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 56.

⁷⁹ Danish Government, “Official Statement,” 26 June 1941, cited in Palmér, *Nazi Chains*, 50.

⁸⁰ Danish Government, “Diplomatic Break with Russia,” 26 June 1941, cited in Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 56.

⁸¹ Danish Government, “Diplomatic Break with Russia,” 26 June 1941, cited in Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 56.

⁸² Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 1-57.

⁸³ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 81-83.

⁸⁴ Reich *SS*, *SS-Man*, 13.

⁸⁵ Reich *SS*, *SS-Man*, 16.

⁸⁶ Reich *SS*, *SS-Man*, 15.

⁸⁷ Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 292-293.

that way, Nazi racial thinking was meant to turn the occupation of Denmark into a constructive endeavor. The concluding section of the booklet dealt with the SS's role in determining "the Fate of the Nordic race." SS students were to know that the war would not lead to "the doom of the Nordic genome," but rather, to the "Nordicization" of Europe. The SS expressed its pride in being "an appropriate steering of all Germanic-conditioned people" toward their rightful glory.⁸⁸ With such a call to arms, this document shows Nazi Germany's military attempt to contend with the paradox of occupying Denmark through force. As Gudme reported in discussing Danish recruits, the SS hoped to redirect Danish tension with Germany into a racial crusade against the USSR.⁸⁹ Doing so would align German military goals and racial overtures to Denmark.

To accomplish this endeavor, the SS used its battlefield arm, the *Waffen-SS* to expand its militarization project into Denmark. Indeed, the German government required Danish volunteers for paramilitary expeditions to "be trained in Germany and led by German officers," which meant "instruction in the German language and German culture." Juxtaposed with this German integration program, volunteers could "bear the word 'Denmark' on their sleeves."⁹⁰ This mosaic of German and Danish identities synthesized the two nationalities so as to suggest pan-Nordic military collaboration. More importantly, the racial thoughts of Danes who embraced racial solidarity were made publicly available, so as to verify Nazi racial ideology. Gudme offered an interpretation of the rightwing Danish newspaper, *Faedrelandet*, which he said shamelessly promoted how "a Nordic regiment would fight Communism, thus securing for Denmark a place of honour in the history of Europe."⁹¹ A Danish volunteer provided similar appeals to national honor in his statement that "Danish soldiers, by standing together and adding their contribution to the struggle against Bolshevism, may reinstate something of Denmark's honour, and only in this way can we make ourselves worthy of freedom."⁹² Ironically, by serving their current occupier, Danes could supposedly recover their masculine military pride that normally protected national independence. This sentiment was encapsulated in Captain Thor Jørgensen's statement that "By permitting us to take part in the fight against Bolshevism Germany has given us a chance to restore Denmark's honour, which suffered a severe blow on the 9th of April."⁹³ Danes who were insecure about the recent emasculation of their country by Germany channeled these anxieties into militaristic fealty toward Germany.

Evidence in support of Danish racial collaboration was also disseminated within Germany, so as to reify Nazism's racial project to its own people. A 1943 epistolary anthology, entitled *Awakening: Letters of Germanic War Volunteers: Letters by Germanic Volunteers of the SS-Division Viking*, provided German translations of letters written by Dutch, Swiss, Flemish, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Danish members of the *Waffen-SS* fighting on the Eastern Front.⁹⁴ Numerous Danish contributions expounded on the heroic struggle for Nordic racial

⁸⁸ Reich SS, *SS-Man*, 59.

⁸⁹ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 81-83.

⁹⁰ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 82.

⁹¹ Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 81.

⁹² Lieutenant-Colonel P. C. Kryssing, *Faedrelandet*, cited in Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 82.

⁹³ Thor Jørgensen, cited in Gudme, *Hitler's "Model Protectorate,"* 82.

⁹⁴ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 5-80.

supremacy, and the German propaganda authorities were eager to pass along these sentiments. Indeed, the Leader of the Reich-SS and the SS-Main Office published the original 1942 edition. Most of the letter writers were not listed by name, but the first Danish contributor proudly claimed that men who serve were “sons of one people.” He latched onto historical notions of Viking expansion, which were embedded in the very name of this unit.⁹⁵ His statements showed the very temporal and spatial notions of race that Wegner identified.⁹⁶ The formula of restoring the Viking past proved recurrent in the German recruitment for the *Waffen-SS* in Denmark.

Also in the Danish letters was the desire to recapture “the Nordic legacy.”⁹⁷ A Danish volunteer commented on the Nordic project of rescuing the Germanic peoples living amongst the “misery, squalor, and filth” of the Soviets, whom he claimed have been “poisoned” and turned into “reared beasts” by the Jews.⁹⁸ Here, the soldier displayed the “reverse sides of the same coin” of Nazi racism that Wegner identified, with revitalized racial purity stemming from racial cleansing.⁹⁹ This trope rejuvenation appeared repeatedly throughout the letters. One man lamented over “the last two-hundred years, which basically represents only a sad episode of the overall history of Denmark.”¹⁰⁰ He expressed his appreciation at German benevolence for letting “Danes ... realize, that the old Denmark in a great Germania must recapture its place in the world like approximately one thousand years ago.”¹⁰¹ The Danish volunteers thus viewed the war as both an existential threat and an opportunity for resurgent greatness.

Regarding the Danish assistance to the German military project, one letter from the anthology stood out. It was from a Danish civilian to his son at the front. The father expressed great pride in having a son devoted enough to die “for the new and better Europe.” In doing so, he relied on the trope of rejuvenation.¹⁰² Furthermore, by denoting that it was a father who wrote this letter to a soldier at the front, the German publisher hoped to make notions of racially motivated military service seem widespread.¹⁰³ This military collaboration was Nazi Germany’s best chance to justify and to capitalize on their occupation of racial peers. But the rhetoric that the Danish volunteers used in their letters conformed almost too perfectly to Nazism’s ideological calls for racial solidarity, and thus the Nazi propagandists could have written these notes strictly for morale purposes. Or, perhaps these letters truly were testaments to the appeal of German ideology to the Danes willing to serve. Either way, the publication of this epistolary anthology for a German audience showed the German desire to resolve the Danish paradox. As with rest of Germany’s cultural and political, this military endeavor fell flat. Only four hundred Danes volunteered with the Danish national “*Frikorps Danmark*.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed,

⁹⁵ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 7.

⁹⁶ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 7; Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 20-21.

⁹⁷ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 8.

⁹⁸ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 40.

⁹⁹ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 40; Wegner, *Waffen-SS*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 69-70.

¹⁰¹ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 70.

¹⁰² Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 60.

¹⁰³ Reich-SS and SS-Main Office, *Awakening*, 60.

¹⁰⁴ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 82.

the number of Danes serving under German Command was only about six thousand.¹⁰⁵

The Nazis hoped to cleanse Eastern Europe of its Slavic and Jewish populations to make their own Germanic empire. The Eastern lands were to be inhabited by “Aryan” farmers, who would provide the new Germany with a guaranteed supply of food. In addition to mass violence against racial enemies, this Nazi vision also required a surplus of Germanic peoples to settle the newly recovered lands. The Nazis planned to “liberate” ethnic Germans living in the East so they could serve as the basis for their pioneering project.¹⁰⁶ However, the Nazis needed additional “Aryan” bodies to fill the large swaths of land found in the Soviet Union. The German occupiers used racial appeals to the Danes help make the Nazi vision a reality. The *SS* education manual articulated a plan to push Nordic peoples to the East to accomplish this ambitious demographic task.¹⁰⁷ More specifically, the German occupiers appealed to the Danish population to move eastward. Gudme claimed that the German occupiers courted “young Danish farmers,” hoping that “these lads” would construct a Germanic empire in “the Ukraine.” He reported with glee that the Danish population resisted the German call for racial collaboration in this wartime project. Still, this German strategy demonstrated the racial esteem in which the Nazis held the Danes, as the Nazis hoped Nordic Danes would help pioneer this Nazi empire.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the eastward settlement of Danes was gendered as a masculine project.¹⁰⁹ It was the chance for Germanic peoples to demonstrate their virility as “restorers of Russian agriculture” for the purposes of building a strong Germany.¹¹⁰

In the face of all of these cultural, political, and military collaborative efforts, the Danes consistently dragged their feet. Danish recalcitrance boiled over in the summer of 1943 with major strikes, demonstrations, and acts of resistance.¹¹¹ Pushed past the breaking point, the German occupiers responded with the proclamation of “martial law for Denmark” on August 29. This declaration replaced the use of Danish domestic law, restricted public meetings, established a strict curfew, and outlawed strikes.¹¹² Giltner successfully showed that this moment, despite being a noticeable rupture in the German occupation tactics, also represented a moment of continuity in Germany’s lenient treatment of Denmark.¹¹³ Indeed, the end of the martial law declaration “guaranteed the integrity of person and of property” of Danes choosing

¹⁰⁵ Gert Laursen, “Danish soldiers in the Waffen-SS,” in *Occupation, Dansk Militærhistorie*, by Admin, October 28, 2013, accessed February 25, 2015, <http://milhist.dk/slaget/danske-soldater-i-waffen-ss/>.

¹⁰⁶ See Collingham, *The Taste of War*, 5, 23-48.

¹⁰⁷ Reich-SS, *SS-Man*, 59.

¹⁰⁸ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 113.

¹⁰⁹ “Kammerat – kom med,” *WorldWarEra.com*, produced by Wikinggruppen, <http://worldwarera.se/en/no-rdic-propaganda/kammerat-kom-med-danish-ww2-propaganda/>, <http://worldwarera.se/images/Kammerat%20kom%20med%20small.jpg>; Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 113.

¹¹⁰ Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 113.

¹¹¹ Richard Petrow, *The Bitter Years: The Invasion and Occupation of Denmark and Norway April 1940-May 1945* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1974), 188-196.

¹¹² “Lexicon: April 9, 1945,” *Danmark under besættelsen og befrielsen*, updated May 7, 2008, accessed March 29, 2015, http://www.besaettelse-befrielse.dk/leksikon_n.html, http://www.besaettelse-befrielse.dk/Illustrationer/29_august_undtagelsestilstand.jpg.

¹¹³ Giltner, *In the Friendliest Manner*, 9-10.

to obey the new stipulations.¹¹⁴ Giltner was surely correct in his claim that these German concessions during a crackdown were about maintaining Denmark's economic contributions to Germany.¹¹⁵ Instead, such a give-and-take relationship between the German occupiers and Danish civilians was probably indicative of the racial conditioning of this occupation. Limitations on German violence were most permissible among perceived racial peers.

This crackdown did result in a huge change for the Danish Jews—the Germans ordered the deportation of Denmark's Jewish population. Historians have debated over how the word got out regarding the liquidation, but the majority of the Jews were able to flee successfully to Sweden.¹¹⁶ The benevolence of certain Danish citizens played a large role in the successful escapes, but more important was the unwillingness of German troops to enforce the roundup strictly.¹¹⁷ Richard Petrow's analysis has provided numerous instances of German occupiers consciously choosing to ignore Jewish refugees. Petrow relied mostly on German "lethargy," but it might have been the racially conditioned nature of this occupation that stayed the hand of numerous Germans.¹¹⁸ This moment saw a continuation of the German desire not to drive too deep of a wedge between themselves and the Danish citizens.

To be sure, the Nazis vilified all Jews. Yet Petrow has demonstrated that even the very small minority of Jews that were caught received much better treatment in their internment than did most European Jews. Indeed, Danish Jews were sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp rather than to one of the killing facilities. Theresienstadt served as the public relations camp for Germany's interactions with the Red Cross, and it was meant to represent the supposedly hospitable conditions in all of Germany's concentration camps.¹¹⁹ Here, the Jewish inmates were allowed to receive care packages from friends back in Denmark.¹²⁰ By April 1945, the Germans even agreed to put the Danish and Norwegian inmates on buses to Sweden.¹²¹ Petrow concluded with a powerful quotation by a German government employee that was meant to explain the release of Danish prisoners. He purportedly claimed, "It is now time ... to save the best of the remaining people of Western Europe."¹²² True or not, the vignette suggested that Germany's interaction with Denmark was conditioned by the Nazi concept of race. The Nazis did not view Danish Jews as racially better; Nazi anti-Semitism did not allow for racial preferences for certain Jews. Rather, it could have been the desire to maintain a positive image of cooperation with the non-Jewish Danes that conditioned the German treatment of Danish Jews. Again, the Danes benefited from the German attempt to grapple with the paradox of having occupied racial peers by force.

¹¹⁴ "Lexicon: April 9, 1945," *Danmark under besættelsen og befrielsen*, http://www.besaettelse-befrielse.dk/leksikon_n.html, http://www.besaettelse-befrielse.dk/Illustrationer/29_august_undtagelsestilstand.jpg.

¹¹⁵ Giltner, "In the Friendliest Manner," 9-10.

¹¹⁶ Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 241.

¹¹⁷ Falik, foreword, xiv-xv; Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 225-229.

¹¹⁸ Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 225.

¹¹⁹ I am by no means trying to write off the sufferings and hardships of the inmates at this camp. Abuse was rampant, and the fear of death was probably ubiquitous. That said, when compared the industrial-scale murder that occurred at the death camps of Eastern Europe, life at Theresienstadt was relatively more tolerable.

¹²⁰ Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 300-313.

¹²¹ Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 314-327.

¹²² Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 327.

As the Soviet armies moved into Germany, Hitler also had to contend with thousands of German refugees fleeing westward. On 4 February 1945, Hitler sent out an order on how to manage these refugees. The document claimed that not only would Germany throw open its arms to displaced Germans, but Denmark would also serve as an acceptable site of refuge. Still clinging to hope of ultimate victory, Hitler clarified that the refugees would only be there “temporarily.” This document showed the continuities of Nazi racial thinking despite the changing circumstances of war. In his mind, Denmark was still a perfectly desirable racial space. Only now, instead of exporting Danes to the East to construct a Germanic empire, Hitler was sending eastern Germans into Denmark to shelter them from Soviet oppression.¹²³ The Soviet invasion thus created a potential demographic problem for Denmark that was an ironic reversal of Nazism’s previous plans for Eastern Europe.

Hitler’s decision demonstrated the lasting impact of the contradiction between Nazi racial idolization of Germanic peoples and Germany’s military policies. He suggested the navy should move German people to Danish safety, so long as doing so was not “impinging upon the day-to-day movement of troops and supplies by sea.”¹²⁴ Even at the end, Nazi policy struggled to align the protection of racial peers with military demands, and Germany’s relationship with Denmark continued to exemplify this paradox.

Concluding Reflections

The German military surrendered its control of Denmark on 4 May 1945 to Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery of the British forces. What had started as a countermeasure against a possible British breach of Danish neutrality culminated in a recognition of British dominance.¹²⁵ With the complete restoration of Danish independence, the revision of the Danish-German border was again on the table for discussion. The Danes had the chance to push the border even further southward into Germany by reclaiming South Schleswig. In 1947, the Danish government rejected any such plans and did not offer a referendum on the issue. Apparently, the Danes did not want to incorporate a substantial German minority into their state. The Danish rejection represented not some ethical transcendence above opportunistic geopolitical squabbling, but rather, it was a similar form of xenophobia towards Germans that certain Danes had expressed before the war.¹²⁶ The legacy of the prewar discourse over race and nationality in this region lingered after 1945.

Germany’s relationship with Denmark during the war itself warrants consideration in terms of Nazi racial ideology, which did not just appear out of thin air on the morning of the German invasion. It had a longer narrative of Nordic solidarity that then trapped the Germans

¹²³ Adolf Hitler, “Order on the Transfer of Refugees from the East to Denmark,” in *The Years 1941 to 1945*, commentary Max Domarus, ed. Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, vol. 4 of *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945 and Commentary by a Contemporary: The Chronicle of a Dictatorship* (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2004) [1973], 3009; Gudme, *Hitler’s “Model Protectorate,”* 113.

¹²⁴ Hitler, “Order on the Transfer of Refugees,” in *The Years 1941 to 1945*, vol. 4 of *Hitler: The Chronicle of a Dictatorship*, 3009.

¹²⁵ Petrow, *The Bitter Years*, 331.

¹²⁶ Norman Berdichevsky, “Danish Dilemmas: South Schleswig after World War II and ‘Unassimilated’ Immigrants Today,” *World Affairs* 167 (2004): 79-80, accessed January 1, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20672711>; Joesten, “Nazis in Scandinavia,” 720-721.

in a paradox on 9 April 1940. This paradox placed perceived security needs against Nazi racial theory. The German occupation apparatus constructed numerous cultural, political, and military projects meant to construct an image of collaboration between the Danish and German people. These projects were meant to reconfirm Nazi racial theories, which Denmark's recalcitrance threatened to upend. Overall, the Germans were unable to impose their racial theories onto the Danes, but their collaborative projects conditioned the occupation and restricted the extent of German aggression. Nazi ideology could thus serve as an ironic limitation on wartime violence.

Numerous other scholars have demonstrated that attempts to grapple with paradoxes provided powerful motors behind historical events.¹²⁷ Alon Confino's use of a paradox to explain the Holocaust provided a great model for rejecting the notion that the Holocaust was "unique."¹²⁸ Rather, he claims that the Holocaust had its particularities but was not an inexplicable aberration devoid of precedent, especially given the numerous political movements that have also demonstrated a violent urge to break with the past.¹²⁹ Drawing on Confino's methods, I conclude that the German occupation of Denmark was not unique.¹³⁰ Rather, it was a perfectly explainable outgrowth of Nazi racial thinking. The idolization of the Nordic race eventually crossed paths with Germany's perceived security needs, and the German attempt to come to terms with this paradox conditioned the wartime occupation experience in Denmark.

¹²⁷ See François Furet, *The French Revolution: 1770-1814*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1996) [1988], 86-87.

¹²⁸ He has argued that the Nazis had a desire to break with the past. This task required a paradoxical obsession with the past itself, which the Nazis construed as Judaism. Thus, the desire to break with the past by purging the Jews from Germany drove forward the Holocaust. Confino, *A World Without Jews*, 13 (for direct quotation), 1-24.

¹²⁹ Confino, *A World Without Jews*, 1-24.

¹³⁰ Confino, *A World Without Jews*, 1-24.