

**HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST:
A Curriculum Guide**

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Rationale..... | Page 2 |
| Unit Outline..... | Page 4 |
| Curricular Goals..... | Page 6 |
| Memorable Moments..... | Page 7 |
| Unit I: Anti-Semitism..... | Page 8 |
| Unit II: Nazis Rise to Power..... | Page 11 |
| Unit III: Final Solution..... | Page 15 |
| Unit IV: Resistance and Rescue..... | Page 21 |
| Unit V: Memory and Remembrance..... | Page 26 |
| Resource List | Page 29 |
| Appendix I | |
| Appendix II | |
| Appendix III | |
| Appendix IV | |
| Appendix V | |
| Appendix VI – Teacher Resources | |

Rationale

Judaism is made up of historical events that have had a grave impact on the way we, as Jews, choose to lead our lives today. The Holocaust was one of the most significant events in Jewish History. One-third of the Jewish population was massacred during this period. Consequently, it directly affects most Jews alive today. The extent and magnitude of this horror were unlike any seen in the past: the mass number of people murdered, the way they were murdered and the reality that this was the result of a deliberate plan on the part of a nation-state.

Many topics can be addressed in relation to the Holocaust. Numerous curricula focus on the moral aspects of the Holocaust, such topics as the righteous gentiles who courageously save the lives of innocent victims, the psychological experience of the victims, life in the concentration camps, or Jewish heroism. Other curricula focus on the factual details of the atrocious acts, such as names, dates, and statistics that transpired during this period of history. This curriculum will concentrate on key historical events and significant personalities, with special attention to the reasons that lie behind these events and actions.

The Holocaust is a historical event which demonstrates evil to its full extreme. Although the Jews had experienced anti-Semitism and persecution in the past, never before was the discrimination part of governmental policy. Ordinary German men turned into cold-blooded murders overnight, thinking nothing of their actions, while others in Germany and around the world watched silently as the Jews were sent to their unnecessary death. Furthermore, during these impossible times the Jew demonstrated mental and physical strength, sometimes through resistance and other times through silence.

The Holocaust has taken on symbolic importance in Jewish life and culture. By examining the cause and effect of these horrific events, we can not only understand the Holocaust as a symbol of tragedy, but as a historical era which shapes who we are as a people. Therefore, as a part of the Jewish community, it is essential for every individual to understand the complexities and nuances of the Holocaust. It is our responsibility to undertake a serious study of this era of Jewish history, to know, not only the facts, but also to understand the cause and effect of these events.

This curriculum is designed to enrich the lives of seniors in high school continuing their Jewish education in a religious school setting. Although they may have already encountered Holocaust studies in their earlier educational career, by senior year they have developed a more mature cognitive style and ability to probe deeper into the facts. Therefore, by offering an opportunity to revisit the facts and functions of the Holocaust through actual documents and personal accounts, this curriculum will enable the students to acquire a more comprehensive and complex understanding of this historical event. In their late teens, these students are now capable of seeing things from many different perspectives. The students can integrate these different perspectives, gaining a deeper capacity for empathy and a more layered understanding of the Jewish people.

Unit Outline

I. Anti-Semitism

This unit will focus on the following: definition of anti-Semitism; types of anti-Semitism; and anti-Semitism in Germany. cause of anti-Semitism; brief history of 20th Century anti-Semitism; four different

Essential Questions:

1. What is the danger in stereotyping?
2. What allows stereotypes to flourish?
3. What are some of the destructive outcomes which could take place?

II. Nazis Rise to Power

This unit will focus on the following: Hitler and the Nazi Party; Anti-Jewish legislation, including the anti-Jewish Boycott, the Enabling Act, the "Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service," the Nuremberg Laws; and Kristallnacht.

Essential Question:

1. How can laws be used in a nation to promote prejudice and persecution?
2. Under what circumstances can charismatic leadership move a people to actions which are against people's moral instinct?

III. The Final Solution

This unit will focus on the following: Himmler and the SS Officers; Ghettoization; evolution of methods for murder; Wannsee Conference; Concentration Camps.

Essential Questions:

1. What are the circumstances under which ordinary people commit violent acts against other human beings?
2. What do we learn from an event like the Holocaust, about dangers of obedience to a government's policies?

IV. Resistance and Rescue

This unit will focus on the following: the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; resistance of Denmark; individual resistance by Janusz Korczak and Hannah Senesh; rescue by "Righteous Gentiles" Sempo Sugihara and Raoul Wallenberg; and rescue by Oskar Schindler.

Essential Questions:

1. How strongly do our ethics and values influence the life choices we make?
2. What is the difference between rescuing someone you know and saving a stranger?
3. What makes a person heroic?

V. Memory and Remembrance

This unit will focus on the memory and the importance remembrance holds in the Jewish religion; exploring a variety of Jewish traditional responses to tragedy and loss; and create a memorial for the Holocaust.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the importance of memory in Judaism?
2. What is the importance of memory in the Holocaust?
3. What purpose does our memory serve us?

Goals for Curriculum

- To understand the role anti-Semitism played in the Holocaust.
- To investigate a variety of domestic conditions which led to the rise of the Nazi Party and its ideologies.
- To explore the cause and effect of the major events which transpired during the Holocaust.
- To gain a greater understanding of the wide-range of human responses when faced with moral choices.
- To explore the importance of remembering the Holocaust.

Memorable Moments

1. Invite a Holocaust survivor to share their story with the class. (*This could be done in a variety of places within the curriculum. I.e. anti-Jewish legislation, ghetto, concentration camps, resistance.*)
2. Invite an individual who was responsible for rescuing Jews during the Holocaust to share their personal story.
3. Create a memorial ceremony for Kristallnacht.
4. Participate in a *Judenrat* simulation, where the students are faced with the task of selecting five members of their community (false characters) to be deported from the ghetto.
5. Participate in a mock murder trial of Eichmann and Himmler
6. Participate in the process of selecting those individuals eligible for the "Righteous Among the Nations."
7. Create a memorial for the Holocaust.
8. Visit the local Holocaust Museum.

UNIT I Anti-Semitism

Unit I introduces the students to the curriculum by laying a concrete and historical foundation for the Holocaust. Students will explore different definitions and various types of anti-Semitism. In addition, this unit will review the history of anti-Semitism, as well as examine its place in modern Germany.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the danger in stereotyping?
2. What allows stereotypes to flourish?
3. What are some of the destructive outcomes which could take place?

Objectives: Students Will Be Able

1. To create a working definition of anti-Semitism.
2. To identify the main causes for anti-Semitism.
3. To define the four different types of anti-Semitism and provide an example for each type.
4. To trace the rise of anti-Semitism in Modern Germany.
5. To identify the major elements of anti-Semitism found in Germany.

Key Concepts:

- **Anti-Semitism:** Prejudice against and fear of Jews, either religiously or racially, or both.
- **Religious Anti-Semitism:** The idea the Jews are the murderers of Jesus. This anti-Semitism stems from the New Testament, which contains 102 anti-Semitic references to the Jewish people.
- **Political Anti-Semitism:** The idea that Jews want to take over the world. Several falsified pamphlets were published propagating this idea. Most influential was the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which claims to be authentic minutes from a meeting of Jewish elders who were devising their plan to take over the world.
- **Economical Anti-Semitism:** The idea that Jews have power over the economy. This form of anti-Semitism stems from the Feudal System, where the Jews played the middleman between the nobles and the serfs, collecting taxes from the serfs, for the nobles. This caused hatred and abuse from those who paid taxes.
- **Social Anti-Semitism:** The idea that Jews are not fully accepted into society, even though their legal status is parallel.

Suggested Learning Experiences:

1. Have students brainstorm ideas of what they believe anti-Semitism means, listing their ideas on the board. Then provide the students with different definitions of anti-Semitism (*See Appendix I*). While the students review the definitions, have them consider the following questions:
 - a. Compare each definition. How are these definitions similar? How do they differ?
 - b. Do you agree/disagree with this definition? Why or Why not?After the students have reviewed the definitions, have the students create their own personal definition of anti-Semitism by giving them the following scenario: A non-Jewish friend from school asks you what anti-Semitism is. How would you explain it to him or her?

2. Have students read an excerpt from the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust on anti-Semitism. (*See Appendix I*) Ask the students to list some of the causes of anti-Semitism. (Focus on the following reasons: Jews had their own culture, Jews often lived with other Jews, separated from non-Jews, Jews had no land of their own, Jews generally chose to abide by the laws of the Torah, rather than the laws of the government, and non-Jews created myths and they came to be popular belief. To conclude, ask the students to write a letter as if they were living during this period of history. They should address this letter to their future grandchild, explaining what has taken place and how it has affected their daily lives.

3. Divide the students into four groups. Assign each group one of the four types of anti-Semitism (Religious, Political, Economical, and Social). (*See Appendix I*) Provide the students with the following guiding questions:
 - a. What is the basis for this form of anti-Semitism?
 - b. Is there evidence of this type of anti-Semitism today? If so, where and in what form?Have examples of anti-Semitic material placed throughout the classroom. Ask students to walk around the room and examine the different pieces of material. Have the students label each piece of material according to the different types of anti-Semitism discussed in class. (*note: one piece may fall into several categories*)¹

4. Have students act as reporters, researching the rise of anti-Semitism in Modern Germany. (*See Appendix I*) Once their research is complete, ask the students to write a newspaper article describing the events, which have led to the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany. Explain the implications these actions are having on the Jews, as well as the non-Jews.

Resources

Dawidowicz, Lucy, S. *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945*. Bantam Books. New York, 1986. Pp. 23-47.

Gutman, Israel, editor. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*. Vol 4. Yad Vashem. Sifrat Poalim. Tel Aviv. Macmillian Publishing Company. New York. London, 1990. Pp.55-74.

¹ Adapted from Havurat Noar Curriculum. Bureau of Jewish Education – Los Angeles.

Havurat Noar Curriculum. Bureau of Jewish Education – Los Angeles.

Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *Jewish Literacy*. William Morrow and Company, Inc. New York, 1991. Pp. 463-470

UNIT II

Nazis Rise to Power

This is a two part Unit. The first half examines the elements that contributed to the Nazis rise to power. It explores both the early life of Adolf Hitler and the evolution and ideology of the Nazi Party. The second half presents several examples of anti-Jewish legislation that took hold under the reign of Hitler. Students will consider the impact these policies had on the Jew's of Germany.

Essential Questions:

1. How can laws be used in a nation to promote prejudice and persecution?
2. Under what circumstances can charismatic leadership move a people to actions, which are against his or her moral instinct?

Objectives: Students Will Be Able

1. To describe Hitler's personal ideology and identify the key elements which contribute to this personal ideology.
2. To outline Hitler's early political career.
3. To list the core values inherent in Nazi ideology.
4. To trace the evolution of the Nazi party and state three reasons for its rise to power.
5. To define the following anti-Jewish Legislation and explain how each had an impact on the Jewish people: The Enabling Act, Anti-Jewish Boycott, the Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service and the Nuremberg Laws.
6. To identify the events which surrounded *Kristallnacht*.

Key Terms:

- ***Mein Kampf***: Hitler's famous book that he wrote while in prison for treason. This book, whose title means "my struggle," offers Hitler's distorted view of his own life, his hatred toward the Jews, and his plans for ruling over Germany.
- **The Enabling Act**: Officially called "Law for Removing the Distress of People and Reich." This gave the cabinet of the Reichstag, which Hitler headed, complete legislative authority for four years. By a vote of 441 to 94, the Enabling Act was passed on March 23, 1933, giving Hitler absolute control of Germany.
- **Anti-Jewish Boycott**: The Nazi newspaper issues a full-page ad in the March 29, 1933, edition for a nationwide boycott of all Jewish shops, Jewish merchandise and Jewish professional, such as doctors and lawyers. On April 1, 1933, SA squads raged through the cities of Germany, painting yellow Stars of David, with a streak of black on every Jewish store. Hitler announced that the boycott should last one day and that no violence should be used. However, the police were advised not to intervene if violence did occur and for three days violence against Jews was common throughout Germany.
- **The "Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service"**: This was the first of some four hundred anti-Jewish decrees in the Third Reich. It authorized the elimination of all Jews and political opponents of the Nazi party from civil service.

- **The Nuremberg Laws:** These laws were passed on September 15, 1935 at a party rally held in the city of Nuremberg. The Nuremberg Laws consisted of “The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor,” and “The Reich Citizen Law.” These laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship and isolated them from other Germans. In addition, these laws raised a new question that had not been answered: Who is a Jew? Therefore, on November 14, 1935, the Nazis answered the question by defining a Jew as a person who has two Jewish parents or three Jewish grandparents. Being a Jew was no longer a matter of self-definition, but rather a matter of genetics.
- **Kristallnacht:** Literally meaning, “Night of Broken Glass.” This act of persecution was initiated after the assassination of a German official, Ernst vom Rath, by Herschel Grynszpan. While studying in France, Herschel’s parents were forcibly deported out of Germany to Poland. Not permitted to enter Poland, they had to endure harsh conditions, barely existing in the no-man’s-land between the two states. When Herschel heard of this incident, he went straight to the Germany embassy in Paris and shot Ernst vom Rath, the first Germany with whom he came into contact. This provided Hitler with the excuse he needed to increase the level of persecution. In fact, this pogrom had been planned well in advance, however, the Nazis used the assassination as a pretext. Therefore, twenty-four hours later, on the night of November 9-10, 1938, Jewish homes and stores were looted, numerous synagogues and Jewish community centers were burned, and ninety-seven Jews were murdered. *Kristallnacht* marked a major transformation of Jewish existence in Germany. It was no longer possible to believe that Hitler would modify his restrictive legislation.
- **Pogrom:** A government-organized or inspired massacre of a minority group, particularly the Jews. It is a Russian word that literally means “riot” or “destruction.”

Suggested Learning Experiences:

1. Have students take on the role of a magazine reporter. Explain that they been given an interview assignment. In pairs, they are to prepare for an interview with Adolf Hitler by research his life prior to his rise to power. (*See Appendix II*) As a magazine reporter, they are responsible for learning about his childhood, family, education, and early political involvement. After writing up the interview, the reporter should make a concluding statement about how they believe Hitler’s life experience contributed to his later role of Fuhrer.
2. Lead a discussion on the core ideas of the Nazi Party, (*See Appendix II*) considering these questions:
 - A. What is the goal of each idea?
 - B. To whom will this idea appeal? Why?
 - C. Do you think any of these ideas would be acceptable to people today? If so, which ones?
 - D. Is it possible to accept the advantages of Nazi ideology and overlook the negatives? What are the benefits of doing such a thing? What are the risks?²
 Following this discussion have the students prepare a campaign, which would provide the Nazi party with a broader base of membership for recruitment. This campaign should include slogans, posters and speeches that demonstrate the party’s ideology.

² Adapted from *Facing History and Ourselves – Resource Guide*

3. Compare and contrast the ideologies of Hitler verse the Nazi Party. What are the similarities? What are the differences?
4. Read the Dr. Seuss book, *The Sneetches*.³ (This book demonstrates how people create in-groups and out-groups. It also demonstrates how a third party can gain power by putting one group against another.) After reading the book, discuss and analyze the steps leading the rise of the Nazi party, focusing on the effects of World War I and the new government, the Weimar Republic. Help the students make the connections between *The Sneetches* and the Nazi Party's use of humiliation after WWI to promote anti-Semitism and gain power. Also, look closely at the Weimar Republic. (See *Appendix II*) Have students make a list of the positive and negative aspects of this new government. Discuss whether or not was destined to fail from the beginning.
5. Set up learning centers for each of the following anti-Jewish legislation: The Enabling Act, Anti-Jewish Boycott, the Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service and the Nuremberg Laws. At each station, students will look at actual documentation and/or background information on the specific act. (See *Appendix II*) They should answer the following questions regarding each act:
 - A. In your own words, explain what this legislation or act means.
 - B. What is the impact on the Jews? Germans?
 - C. What is the significance of this act or legislation in relation to the Holocaust?
 After completing all of the stations student will be asked to write a letter to the editor of a Jewish newspaper, expressing their concerns for what is transpiring in Germany.
6. Have the students write a newspaper article on each of the anti-Jewish legislation. Each article should include the following information: the details of the decrees, some personal reactions from German citizens, and some personal reactions from German Jews. (See *Appendix II*)
7. Have students put together a memorial service for *Kristallnacht*. (See *Appendix II*) Students should consider the following information before creating the service:
 - A. Was *Kristallnacht* a *Pogrom*? If so, what made it a *Pogrom*?
 - B. What evidence suggests it was planned?
 - C. Who did the German's blame for *Kristallnacht*?
 - D. Are victims ever to blame for the violence committed against them?
 - E. What were some reactions to *Kristallnacht*? Germans? Jews? World?
 - F. What was significant about *Kristallnacht*?
 - G. Why is *Kristallnacht* considered the "bridge experience" to the Final Solution?

Resources

www.us-israel.org/jsource/

Berenbaum, Michael. *Witness to the Holocaust*. HarperCollins. New York, 1997. Pp. 1-8, 10-13, 24-30, 40-55.

³ Random House, 1961

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *Understanding the Holocaust: An Introduction*. Cassell. London. New York, 1999. Pp. 27-36.

Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945*. Bantam Books. New York, 1986. Pp. 48-69.

Edelhait, Abraham J and Herschel Edelheit. *History of the Holocaust: A Handbook and Dictionary*. Westview Press. Boulder, 1994. Pp. 36-37.

Flaim, Richard F. *The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*. Anti-Defamation League. New York, 1983. Pp. 61-62

Yahil, Leni. *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945*. Oxford University Press. New York. Oxford, 1990. Pp. 43-52.

UNIT III

The Final Solution

This unit will examine the German decision to annihilate millions of people. Several areas of the Final Solution are covered including, Himmler and the role of the SS Officers in the Holocaust, the Wannsee Conference, the evolution of methods they used for mass murder, ghettoization, and the concentration camps.

Essential Questions:

1. What are the circumstances under which ordinary people commit violent acts against other human beings?
2. What do we learn from an event like the Holocaust, about dangers of obedience to a government's policies?

Objectives: Students Will Be Able

1. To identify Adolf Eichmann and his role in the Final Solution
2. To identify Heinrich Himmler and his role in the Final Solution.
3. To define the philosophy and critical functions of the SS.
4. To analyze the circumstances under which the SS officers were able to conduct their business.
5. To describe the conditions inside the ghetto.
6. To identify the position of the *Judenrat* and analyze their impossible choices.
7. To trace the evolution of methods for mass murder in the Final Solution.
8. To identify the significance of the Wannsee Conference to the Final Solution.
9. To describe the conditions of daily life in the concentration camps.
10. To analyze the personal choices people were faced with inside the camps.

Key Concepts:

- ***Einsatzgruppen*** (Action Groups): Mobile units of the police or SS that followed the German Army into conquered territories. They were responsible for killing Jewish civilians and others by the thousands.
- **Gestapo**: The *Geheime Staatspolizei*, the Secret State Police.
- ***Judenrat***: Council of Jewish elders established by Nazi in the ghettos to administer Nazi orders and policies among the Jewish inhabitants.
- ***Kappo***: Concentration camp prisoner in charge of other prisoners.
- ***Schutzstaffel* – SS – Protection Squad**: Originally an elite group that served as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS became, under Himmler, a huge military-like organization that provided staff for camp guards, police units, and some fighting detachments.
- ***Sonderkommando***: A commando of Jewish prisoners in the six death camps selected to work in the gas chambers and crematoria. Their task was to pull out the bodies of gassed Jews, searched them for any valuables the victims had been able to conceal before being driven into the gas chambers, tear out any gold fillings, and so on, take them on lorries to the crematoria to be incinerated, or bury them in large pits. Periodically, members of a *Sonderkommando* underwent a selection and were themselves gassed, being replaced by new victims.

- **Sturmabteilung** – SA: The Nazi private police force, also known as Storm Troopers and Brownshirts.
- **SD: Security Service**

Key Names:

- **Adolf Eichmann:** Initially, Eichmann worked in the head office of the SD. Later he was transferred to a new SD Intelligence Department that dealt with the Jews. Eichmann soon became the leading expert on all things Jewish. As the “Jewish Question” became more of a priority, the SD called for concentrating the management of Jewish emigration in the framework of a special office, one that would deal with all matters relating to Jewish emigration. Eichmann became the symbol for the mass murder of the Jews, overseeing the expulsion of Jews from Greater Germany, as well as the transportation of Jews for the implementation of the Final Solution.
- **Reinhard Heydrich:** SS Obergruppenführer. Together with Himmler, created the Nazi police state and the concentration camp system. He also served as chief of the *Einsatzgruppen*.
- **Heinrich Himmler:** Head of the SS and Nazi police organization. Organizer of the concentration camps and the architect of the Final Solution.
- **Rudolf Hoess:** Commandant of Auschwitz.

Suggested Learning Experiences:

1. Explain that they are about to prepare for the trial of Adolf Eichmann and Heinrich Himmler. Assign each student one of the following 12 roles. (*Note: If there are more students than roles, you can pair up the students; if there are too many roles, you can cut down the number of attorneys or jurors. Also, you may choose to do this activity in two parts in order to allow all students to participate in the research of both individuals*)
 - A. 2 Defense attorneys for each defendant
 - B. 2 Prosecutors for each defendant
 - C. Adolf Eichmann (defendant)
 - D. Heinrich Himmler (defendant)
 - E. Judge
 - F. Secretary
 - G. Jurors: made up of those not participating in the research of this trial (*i.e. Those who are participating in the Eichmann trial will act as the jury of the Himmler trial.*)

In order to prepare for this trial, each participant needs to research the individual involved in their trial. The attorneys need to be able to ask educated questions, and the defendants are responsible for answering, to the best of their ability, as they believe that person would have responded. Provide these questions as a guideline:

- a. What was his personal history prior to his role in the Final Solution?
- b. What was his political involvement prior to joining the Nazi party?
- c. What were his different responsibilities within the Nazi party?
- d. What was his level of anti-Semitism?
- e. What was the philosophy and function of the SS?

(See Appendix III)

2. Write the initials "SS" on the board. Have students share their reactions to this word. What words come to mind when they think of the term SS officer? Next, have the students research the philosophy and functions of the SS in the Final Solution. From their research, the students should create an informational pamphlet explaining the above information. (See Appendix III)

3. Read excerpts from *Ordinary Men* by Christopher Browning and *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. (See Appendix III) Lead a discussion about the men in Police Battalion 101.

Suggested Questions:

- A. What was the population of Police Battalion 101?
- B. What motivated certain men to walk away, while others continued to murder?
- C. What part did pure pressure play in the murders?
- D. What part did anti-Semitism play?
- E. Why did certain men believe that what they did was acceptable?
- F. What kind of value system do you believe these men had?

4. Show the video *A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto*. This is a 30 minute black and white film, based on the still photographs of Wehrmacht Sergeant Heinz Jost who illegally took photos inside the ghetto in November, 1941. This film portrays the diversity of conditions existing in the ghetto. The photos also depict some of the cultural life found in the ghetto. Following the film, have the students write a letter to a relative in Palestine, explaining the living conditions in the ghetto and their response to these conditions.

5. Judenrat Simulation:

You are the member of the *Judenrat* in the Warsaw Ghetto. With the other members of that council, you must select five of your own people in the ghetto to be removed for transport to a concentration camp. The *Judenrat* has been called into session to discuss the people who are listed below as "possible candidates" for deportation tomorrow morning. If you cannot make a decision, the council members will face the deadly consequences.⁴

- A. Rabbi: He is 55 years of age and the spiritual leader of the community.
- B. Adam: He is 48 years of age and has connections to a member of the Third Reich. Through these connections, he is able to get extra food and supplies for those living in the ghetto.
- C. Joseph: He is 42 years of age and provides the medical service for the ghetto.
- D. Dina: She is a 7-year-old orphan whose parents were killed during a pogrom.
- E. Hannah: She is a 30-year-old prostitute who provides "services" to the Nazis in exchange for food and clothing for the people in the ghetto.
- F. Jacob: He is a violinist who speaks fluent German. He has been most successful in hearing about and knowing the Nazi plans for the ghetto before they are implemented. Jacob will not leave the ghetto without his wife, Sarah.
- G. Sarah: She is the wife of Jacob and is six months pregnant. She will also not leave the ghetto without her husband, Jacob.

⁴ This was adapted from an activity in "The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience – Curriculum Guide"

- H. Samuel: He is a 28-year-old strong man. He has been able to protect the others in the ghetto by taking the physical abuse, which would otherwise be directed toward others.
- I. Abraham: He is a 35-year-old scholar, artist, and literary expert. He is keeping records, art, memoirs, and journal of experiences in the ghetto.
- J. Mordechai: He is a 17-year-old activist who seems to hold the people in the ghetto together with his spirit, his hope, his youth, and his conviction.
(See Appendix III for background information on the Judenrat)

6. Discuss and analyze the evolution of the assault on the Jews. (See Appendix III)
With every method of assault, discuss the following:

- A. What was the goal of this method?
- B. What impact did it have on the victim?
- C. What impact did it have on the perpetrator?
- D. What was the reason for the change in methods?

As part of the analysis, use the video *Ambulance* to further explore the method of gassing by van. (This is a black and white film with no dialogue. It is a dramatization of a group of children and their adult caretakers about to board a mobile gas van. The film is full of symbolism and depicts the event without any language.) Following the film, have the students spend a few minutes writing a response.

7. In pairs, have the students read the *Protocols of the Wannsee Conference* and answer the following questions:

- A. What was the goal of the Wannsee Conference?
- B. Why was emigration no longer an effective solution for the Final Solution?
- C. What was decided upon as a temporary alternative to emigration?
- D. According to the *Protocols of the Wannsee Conference*, how was the Final Solution to be carried out?
- E. Who are the so-called "experts" referred to in the text?
- F. Look at the breakdown of the Jewish population. What is your reaction to these numbers?
- G. What is the significance of the Wannsee Conference to the Final Solution?

Using a large piece of poster board, have the students create an opposition poster in response to the decisions made at the Wannsee Conference. (See Appendix III)

8. Ask the students to make a list of what they would pack if they had to pick and leave tonight and could only bring one suitcase. After making the lists, have the students share some of the items on their list. Ask them why they chose the items that they did. Explain to them that this was the situation for many Jews during the Holocaust. They had only a few minutes to pack up their personal belongings and they could only take as much as they could carry. This was the first process of deportation. Have the students go around to different stations to learn about life in the concentration camps. At each station, students will read personal accounts from Holocaust survivors. (See Appendix - Note: Some of the material is graphic and difficult to read. Please be aware of the various reactions your students may have.) At each station, the students will be asked to react to what they have read.

Station 1: Deportation Station 3: Life in the camps
Station 2: Internment Station 4: Labor

9. Show the film, *Theresienstadt: Gateway to Auschwitz*. This 58-minute film provides background information on the ghetto/transit camp, Theresienstadt. Additionally, it includes interviews from some of the 100 children who survived, their poems, drawings and paintings. (Note: teacher may also want to use "... I Never Saw Another Butterfly..." as a supplement to the video. This is a book of Children's drawings and paintings from Theresienstadt - edited by Hana Volavkova). Following the video, have students write a poem or draw a picture as a response forum. Leave time at the end of class to allow students to share their work.
10. Put the words "choiceless choices" on the board. Ask the students what they think this means. Discuss the idea of a choiceless choice. (Definition: The idea of victims being caught in the situation of an impossible dilemma. They were forced to choose between the inconceivable and the impossible, creating a situation that surpasses one's capacity for moral judgement. – Note: for more detailed information, consult Lawrence Langer's book *Versions of Survival*.) Provide the students with two to three different scenarios in which victims were faced with these choiceless choices (See Appendix III). Lead a discussion about each scenario. Suggested Questions: What were all possible options for this scenario? What are the consequences of each of these options? Under the circumstances, do you feel this was the best possible decision?
12. Have a Holocaust survivor speak to the students and share their personal story. (Note: Make sure the students prepare questions ahead of time.)

Resources

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Videos:

Ambulance – 8 minutes, black and white. Alden Films.

A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto – 30 minutes, black and white. Filmmakers Library.

Theresienstadt: Gateway to Auschwitz – 58 minutes, color and black and white. Cinema Guild.

UNIT IV

Resistance and Rescue

This unit will investigate resistance and rescue efforts by both Jews and non-Jews. It will concentrate on two types of resistance: the visible form, which manifested itself through violence and the subtle form often found in the ghettos and camps. Specifically, this unit will focus on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the resistance of Denmark and individual resistance by Janusz Korczak and Hannah Senesh. In addition, this unit will deal with efforts of rescue by Righteous Gentiles, such as Sempo Sugihara, Raoul Wallenberg, and Oskar Schindler.

Essential Questions:

1. How strongly do our ethics and values influence the life choices we make?
2. What is the difference between rescuing someone you know and saving a stranger?
3. What makes a person heroic?

Objectives: Students Will Be Able:

1. To define the word "heroism."
2. To define the word "resistance."
3. To identify examples of resistance found within the ghettos, the camps, and by specific individuals.
4. To analyze the actions of these events and people, through discussion.
5. To define the word "rescuer."
6. To define the phrase "Righteous Among the Nations."
7. To describe the process by which the "Righteous Among the Nations" are selected.

Key Names:

- **Mordecai Anielowicz:** Young Zionist who led the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April-May 1943.
- **Christian X:** The King of Denmark who refused to release Danish Jews to the Nazis.
- **Janusz Korczak:** A Polish-Jewish educator/doctor who ran an orphanage in Warsaw, as well as offered child-rearing advice on the radio before the war. He was well respected by both Jews and Christians. When the Nazis ordered Korczak and his children to be deported, many Christians offered to hide him. He refused to abandon his orphans, and therefore went with them to the Treblinka gas chambers. Witnesses say that he went silently, with his head held high.
- **Hannah Senesh:** The Haganah parachutist who landed in Nazi-occupied Europe and was executed as a British spy.
- **Oskar Schindler:** Schindler was a member of the Nazi party for business reasons. Prior to the war, Schindler was known for his love of money, wine and women. When the war began, he saw it as a chance to make easy money. Soon after Germany invaded Poland, he came to Cracow in search of business opportunities. He then proceeded to take over a failed cookware factory outside the city and make fortunes off of mess kits for German soldiers. His profits were high because he used low-paid Jewish workers from the ghetto. Only after the Germans began to liquidate the Cracow ghetto and Schindler witnessed acts of violence against the Jews, did he change his ways from being just a businessman, to becoming a rescuer. He then

spent a large sum of his money to keep his workers safe. First he turned his factory into a subcamp of a labor camp in Plazow and had 500 Jews working for him. Then in the fall of 1944, the Nazis order that the camp be closed down and all workers be sent to Auschwitz. Unwilling to let that happen, Schindler put together a list of eleven hundred Jews that he claimed as his workers and influenced the Nazis to transport those individuals to a new factory he was building in Czechoslovakia.

- **Sempo Sugihara:** The consul of Japan, located in Kovno, the capital of independent Lithuania, in the autumn of 1939. Sugihara's main task was to report on the movements of the German and Russian armies on the eastern front to determine whether Germany really intended to attack its Soviet ally, as was promised to the suspicious Japanese. While serving as consul, he provided Jewish refugees with Japanese visas. From August 10 to September 1, 1940, when he left Kovno, on orders from his government, Sugihara signed thousands of transit visas.
- **Raoul Wallenberg:** He came to Budapest in July 1944, as an agent of the American War Refugee Board and the Swedish government. Officially he was the secretary of the Swedish legation in Hungary, with the authority to issue passports. By the time Wallenberg got to Hungary only 250,000 of 650,000 remained. He attempted to save lives by creating a passport that placed the holder and his property under the protection of the Swedish government until emigration to Sweden could be arranged. When the Germans prohibited the Jews from traveling through Germany to Sweden, Wallenberg used the money he received from the American War Refugee Board to rent thirty-two buildings in Budapest, where he housed at least twenty thousand Jews awaiting emigration to Sweden.

Suggested Learning Experiences:

1. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following areas about the Warsaw ghetto uprising: Layout of the ghetto, leaders of the ghetto/ uprising, planning and execution of the uprising. Each group will research their area.

Layout:

- a. How did they use the layout for their benefit?
- b. How did they survive for as long as they did?
- c. Where did they hide the weapons? Food?
- d. Describe their hiding places.

Leaders/organizations:

- a. What, if any, impact did this revolt have on others dealing with the persecution?
- b. Who were the individuals who played a large part in the uprising?
- c. What motivated them to plan a revolt?

Planning and execution:

- a. What went into the planning process?
- b. Describe the events which transpired during the revolt.
- c. How long was the uprising?
- d. Was the fight worth the fight? Why?

Each group is responsible for writing one section of the Warsaw Ghetto underground newspaper. Each section should include factual articles, interviews and editorials. All sections will be compiled and passed out to the entire class.

(See Appendix IV)

2. Write the word “resistance” on the board. Ask the students what they think “resistance” means. Ask for examples of resistance they may have witnessed and the reason those acts could be considered resistance. Then, divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following individuals: Mordecai Anielewicz, Janusz Korczak, or Hannah Sennesh. The members of the group are to find out as much as they can about their assigned person, focusing specifically on the particular acts of resistance demonstrated in the Holocaust. Send them to the Temple library to do the research. (*See Appendix IV*) After they have done their research, they are to create a poster displaying what they have learned about their individual. In addition, each group will present their person to the rest of the class, again, emphasizing their act of resistance. To conclude, have the students write an obituary for each of these individuals.

3. Discuss the meaning of the “Righteous Among the Nations.” (A title given to those non-Jewish individuals who rescued Jews in mortal danger in countries under Nazi authority) Review the process of choosing “Righteous Among the Nations” with the students (*See Appendix IV*) and explain that they will be participating in the decision process. Once they understand the criteria for choosing an individual, present the different cases and facilitate discussion regarding their decisions.⁵

Scenarios:

- A. Hans Calmeyer of Holland had the responsibility for separating Jews from non-Jews in cases where lineage of an individual was unclear. To undermine the system and save Jews, he fabricated their background whenever he could. Whenever doubts about a person’s origins were successfully raised, deportations were postponed until further classifications could be made. Once Calmeyer succeeded in postponing the deportations, he would secure fake documents and affidavits from cities where it would be difficult to verify the information. Half the people on Calmeyer’s list were fabricated in this way. By playing for time, Calmeyer succeeded in saving 2,800 Jews.
- B. Kurt Gerstein was part of the Nazi destruction process. He was a member of the SS from 1941 until his death in July 1945. In January 1942, Gerstein was appointed head of the Technical Disinfection Service of the Waffen SS where he was responsible for improving the efficiency of the gas chambers by producing the highly toxic prussic acid (Zyklon B). He claimed to have joined the SS in order to actively fight and learn more about the aims of the Nazis and their secrets. He joined in 1940 after being told that the mentally ill patients were being killed. Among those killed was his sister-in-law. In August 1942, Gerstein inspected the extermination camps at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. At Belzec, he witnessed the gassing of a transport of Jews. On his way back to Berlin, Gerstein unexpectedly met the Secretary to the Swedish Legation. Gerstein confided in the Secretary about what he had just witnessed, as well as the entire plan for the Final Solution, because he believed that if the extermination of the Jews was publicly acknowledged by the neutral countries, the German people would demand the killings to stop. For this reason, he also informed the Superintendent of the Confessing Church, members of the Dutch resistance, the coadjutor of the Catholic Bishop of Berlin, the press attaché at the Swiss Legation in Berlin, and

⁵ Adapted from “*Those Who Dared: Rescuers and Rescued*”

anyone else who he felt would spread the word about these atrocities. His efforts to alert the West did not stop the demise of European Jewry. The Allies already knew this information from other sources, but they were not prepared to do anything concrete to terminate the murders.

- C. Before the war, Zofia Kossak-Szatowska, a pious Polish Catholic from a prominent family, had distinguished herself as a writer of historical novels. As a nationalist with well-known right-wing sympathies and membership in the Catholic organization Front for a Reborn Poland (F.O.P.), she did not appear to be someone likely to fight for the Jews. Nevertheless, she actively worked with the underground as a representative of the F.O.P. During the summer of 1942, Zofia wrote, "The Protest," an illegal leaflet condemning the extermination of the Jews and the silence of America, England, and the Poles. "This silence can no longer be tolerated. Whatever the reason for it, it is vile...Whoever is silent...becomes a partner to the murder. Whoever does not condemn, consents," she asserted. Although she demanded that Catholics and Poles raise their voices in protest against these atrocities, she assured them that they need not give up their negative attitudes toward Jews. Zofia established an underground organization to save the Jews after the publication of her leaflet was realized on December 4, 1942. She continued her mission, which led to her capture in 1943 where she was incarcerated in Auschwitz for almost a year. After being discharged, she began saving Jewish children by placing them in convents and other religious institutions.
4. Place the word "hero" on the board. Ask the students what they think this word means. What makes a person a hero? Does a hero possess certain qualities? Or is a hero defined by his or her actions? Following this discussion, have the students independently move around the three stations. At each station, provide the students with reading material about each of the following men: Sempo Sugihara, Raoul Wallenberg, and Schindler. (*See Appendix IV*) Provide the student with the following guiding questions to be addressed at each station:
- A. Are these men heroes?
- B. If so, what makes them heroes? If not, why not?
- After the students have completed the stations, place three signs on different sides of the room. (Yes, No, Undecided) Then re-ask the question for each man, Was he a hero? Have the students move to the side of the room which best represents their position. Allow a few minutes for each group to discuss why they chose that side of the room, then ask one representative to explain their reasoning. After all the groups have had a chance to express their views, ask if any student would like to reconsider their answer. If so, they may relocate to that side of the room. To conclude, ask the students to write an epitaph for the rescuer they could most relate to.
5. Watch *Schindler's List*, followed by a discussion of Oskar Schindler and his actions as a rescuer.

6. Discuss and analyze the actions of Denmark. (*See Appendix IV*)

Suggested Questions:

- a. Were the Danes rescuers or resistors?
- b. What factors led to the rescue of the Danish Jews?
- c. Was their aim to save the Jews or to express their opposition to Nazi rule?

Resources:

www.us-israel.org/jsource/

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UNIT V

Memory and Remembering

This unit will begin with a discussion on the idea of memory and the importance remembrance holds in the Jewish religion. It will continue by exploring a variety of Jewish traditional responses to tragedy and loss as a way of remembering. The students will then be asked to create a memorial for the Holocaust.

Essential Questions:

4. What is the importance of memory in Judaism?
5. What is the importance of memory in the Holocaust?

Objectives: Students Will Be Able:

1. To explain the importance of memory in Judaism.
2. To list different traditional responses to tragedy and loss.
3. To explain the importance of commemorating the Holocaust.
4. To create a memorial dedicated to the Holocaust.

Key Concepts:

- **Kaddish:** Literally means, “holy.” It is a prayer in praise of God. It is a declaration of deep faith in the exalted greatness of God and a petition for ultimate redemption and salvation. The Kaddish is one of the oldest prayers in Jewish liturgy. Although it is not technically a prayer for the dead, it is recited at every service in honor of the deceased.
- **El Maleh Rachamim:** Literally means, “God, full of compassion” and refers to a prayer offered at the conclusion of the service at a chapel or synagogue, and/or just before the Kaddish if the funeral is held at graveside. The prayer asks God to give us rest to the soul of the deceased and includes the deceased’s Hebrew name. It is a late addition to the funeral liturgy.
- **Eulogy:** A tribute to the deceased, which is delivered during the funeral service. The eulogy is an old Jewish custom, used to recount the accomplishments of the deceased, to pay honor to the memory of the deceased, and to bring comfort to the family and friends by remembering the good.
- **Yaherzeit:** A solemn day of remembrance in prayer and meditation that commemorates the anniversary of a death. A light is lit in memory of the deceased on the eve of the Yaherzeit and allowed to burn throughout the next 24 hours.
- **Keriah – tearing of the garments:** Literally means, “tearing.” This refers to a ritual in which clothing or a black ribbon of those family members in mourning is torn. This act is performed at the moment of death or when the body is being lowered in the ground. This is the moment of the most intense grief and therefore, an outlet must be given to the mourners.

Suggested Learning Experiences:

1. Ask the students if anyone has been to a funeral? If so, what are their memories about it? (*Note: This discussion may bring up some intense emotions concerning death and dying. Be aware of what is happening in the life of your students and be prepared to help the process some of their feelings.*) Ask, what is the purpose of a

funeral? (Focus on ideas such as: showing respect for those before us, gaining inspiration from the life of the deceased, expressing emotions for the tragedy) Ask the students to list some parts of a Jewish funeral. (Mourners Kaddish, El Maleh Rachamim, tearing the garments, eulogies) Explain to the students that the Jewish people have struggled with the issue of how to commemorate the Holocaust. Various traditional rituals such as those from the funeral have been used in commemorations. Set up learning centers regarding each part of the funeral. At each station, the students will participate in various activities, which will teach them about the ritual and encourage them to think about how to incorporate these rituals in a memorial for the Holocaust.⁶ (See Appendix V)

A. Station 1: Tearing of Garments

Questions to be addressed:

- a. In your own words, describe the meaning and history of tearing the garments of mourners.
- b. What is the emotional connection between tearing the garments and the death of a loved one?
- c. What other actions would accomplish the same goal?
- d. Could this ritual be incorporated in a Holocaust Memorial? If so, what are some possibilities?

B. Station 2: El Maleh Rachamim

Questions to be addressed:

- a. Why do you think it was necessary to write a prayer for the dead?
- b. Read the translation of the prayer. Is there anything you would add to this prayer to make it more relevant for your life?
- c. Could this ritual be incorporated in a Holocaust Memorial? If so, what are some possibilities?

C. Station 3: Eulogy

Questions to be addressed:

- a. What is the purpose of a eulogy?
- b. What is the benefit of remembering the accomplishments of the deceased?
- c. Could this ritual be incorporated in a Holocaust Memorial? If so, what are some possibilities?

D. Station 4: Kaddish

Questions to be addressed:

- a. What is the meaning of the word Kaddish?
- b. What ideas are discussed in the Kaddish?
- c. What is the purpose of reciting the mourner's Kaddish? Who being comforted?
- d. Could this ritual be incorporated in a Holocaust Memorial? If so, what are some possibilities?

E. Station 5: Yahzeit Candle

Questions to be addressed:

- a. What are some reasons for this custom?
- b. How can this custom help commemorate the deceased?
- c. Could this ritual be incorporated in a Holocaust Memorial? If so, what are some possibilities?

⁶ Adapted from a Havurat Noar lesson

2. As a concluding project, have the students create a memorial, commemorating the Holocaust. (*Note: This assignment should be completed over a three-class period*)
- A. Part I: Create the memorial
- Students must include at least one aspect of each unit covered in class, demonstrating their understanding of the curriculum as a whole.
 - Ideas to think about:
 - *What would you write on or near the memorial?
 - *What materials do you need to create this memorial?
- B. Part II: Construct the memorial
- Provide the students with necessary material to create the memorial.
- C. Part III: Presenting memorials to the class
- Students should explain each part of their memorial. What does each part mean? What audience is this memorial made for and why? Where do you see this memorial being located and why? How does this effectively represent the memory of the Holocaust?

Resources:

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Resources

www.us-israel.org/jsource/

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Theresienstadt: Gateway to Auschwitz – 58 minutes, color and black and white. Cinema Guild.

APPENDIX I

Anti-Semitism: Definitions

- Any activity that tends to force or hold Jews in an inferior position and to limit their economical, political, and social rights; this is the definition of anti-Semitism. It is not simply opposition to Jews because they are different, although that has sometimes been the explanation. It is more often, at least in the modern world, opposition to Jews because they are not different, i.e., because they have become effective competitors for the values being pursued by the prejudiced person.
(J. Milton Yinger, *Anti-Semitism: A Case Study in Prejudice and Discrimination*. Anti-Defamation League. New York, 1969.)
- A term coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 to represent the systematic hatred of Jews.
- A pathological hatred of Jews based primarily on the fact that Jews exist and are perceived to be a threat to the established world order.
- The denial to Jews of such rights and powers normally granted to other people.
(All three definitions come from "History of the Holocaust: A Handbook and Dictionary." Abraham J Edelheit and Herschel Edelheit. Westview Press. Boulder, 1994.)

whose territory, as soon as it was seized, was used for the harshest and most brutal anti-Jewish measures, which were passed months and even years before they were applied in the Reich itself.

In the countries that were militarily defeated—France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Croatia), and Greece—the local German military commander or the puppet regime generally introduced legal measures defining who was to be regarded as a Jew and eliminating Jews from the country's economic life. This also occurred in states allied with Germany (Italy, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania; and Hungary), although in such cases the Reich had to exert varying degrees of pressure to overcome the resistance shown by most of these governments. The only country under German control that enacted no anti-Jewish legislation was Denmark, whose situation and status saved it from German pressure, and which also succeeded in saving most of its Jewish population when the Germans finally resolved to deport that country's Jews in July 1943.

[See also Bernheim Petition; Entjudung; Law and Judiciary in Nazi Germany; Nuremberg Laws; Statut des Juifs.]

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UWE ADAM

ANTISEMITIC FILMS. See Films, Nazi Antisemitic.

ANTISEMITISM (Ger., *Antisemitismus*). The term "antisemitism," denoting opposition to

and hatred of Jews, became widely accepted from the end of the 1870s. Principally it referred to the views at the core of the anti-Jewish political trends that appeared throughout Europe in the period following the Emancipation of the Jews in the nineteenth century. These were sociopolitical movements with nationalist and racist concepts, which placed opposition to Jews and to the threat which the Jews allegedly posed at the center of their outlook and activities. With the passage of time, "antisemitism" came to denote hatred of Jews in all its forms, throughout history.

The causes of antisemitism, as well as its enduring nature and intensity, are based primarily on the religious and spiritual creed of Judaism and on the role played by Jews in the economy and other spheres of life in the Western world. Furthermore, through the centuries the term "Jew" has been associated with concepts, stereotypes, images, and calumnies that together formed a negative composite image on both the conscious and the emotional level, often almost without any relationship to Jewish society as it really was.

Many believe that the principal roots and causes of antisemitism lie in the confrontation and antagonism between Christianity and Judaism. According to this view, the antipathy to Jews that existed in the Greco-Roman world, based on Jewish monotheism and different life-style, was of marginal and temporary significance, and it is from Christianity that antisemitism derives its real force and its continuity. The essence of the conflict between the two religions, which have a common root, is mainly theological, grounded in the issue of Jesus as the Messiah, and in the place of Judaism and the Jews in the Old and New Testaments. The Christian church ascribes to the Jews as such the guilt of deicide, and the inferior status to which Christianity relegated the Jews was interpreted not only as an expression of Christianity's superiority, but also as proof of its veracity, of the "victory of the Church over the Synagogue." Within these components of Christian dogma are to be found some of the bases of what became the cornerstones of antisemitism. The guilt ascribed to the Jews was a collective guilt; not only the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus' crucifixion were



**T E S T V É R ! A K A R O D , H O G Y E Z M E G -
V Á L T O Z Z O N ? H A R C O L J V E L Ü N K A N Y I L A S -
K E R E S Z T E S T Á B O R B A N !**

Vezérünk: gróf FESTETICS SÁNDOR.

Főkerületvezetőnk: dr. FEHÉR ISTVÁN. Központ: NZI L. P. D. TÁBOR-C. 2.

Felelős kiadó: Furgács Cséh László sajtóírók.

1938. évi 11. számú 11. sz. 11. sz.

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A Hungarian antisemitic poster. The text reads: "Brother! If you want to have a change, join and fight with us, the Arrow Cross Party. Our leader is Count Sándor Festetics. Our district leader is István Fehér. The center: Szeged."

deemed guilty, but all the seed of Israel, for ever and ever. The distinction made between Christians, seen as personifying God's truth and mercy and representing the true Israel, and the Jews, seen as heretics wallowing in sin, developed into simplistic folk motifs in which the Jew is the embodiment of evil, the schemer and bearer of harm and disaster—that is, he is linked to and endowed with demonic powers.

In time the anxieties and fears, as well as the stereotypical image of the Jews, entered the folklore of Christian peoples, their cultural legacy, their literature, and their education, and were no longer mere components of religious thought but part of the general cultural background of Western society. Some of these concepts became rooted in antisemitism and accompanied it in all its forms.

First, the wrongdoing of an individual Jew is not the manifestation of a personal flaw but an expression of the negative characteristics of all Jews, and the responsibility for such individual wrongdoing falls on all Jews. Second, the Jew is *eo ipso* to be suspected as having a hand in natural disasters, epidemics, and other crises, and there is no need to look for a rational explanation or pertinent evidence to prove his complicity in such events. Third, the Jews are a closed and unified community that formulates rules of morality and ethical standards for its own kind, different from those for outsiders. Out of the immense quantity and great variety of writings composed by the Jewish people in the course of its long history—sometimes in a spirit of openness and tolerance and sometimes reflecting the impact of outside pres-

sure—the antisemites extracted those elements (especially from Talmudic literature) that could be misrepresented as proving Jewish hatred of and alienation from non-Jews, and identified as characterizing the Jews. Fourth, the Jews despise physical work, especially farming, and worship money and moneylending for interest; their role in human society is parasitic and unproductive. In some European languages the term “Jew” is synonymous with cheating and the extraction of usurious interest.

Modern antisemitism is a by-product of ideological and social developments during the period of the Enlightenment and the rise of the middle classes. In revolutionary FRANCE the “Jewish question” arose not as a separate issue but in connection with the now-accepted universalistic principle that equal civil rights should be granted to all men, regardless of religion or origin. In discussions in the National Assembly of France on the question of granting equal civil rights to Jews, the argument was raised that these rights should be denied to the Jews because they were not only a religious entity but a nation. Even the most ardent advocate of equal civil rights for Jews, Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre, declared, in December 1789, that “Jews should be given nothing as a nation, but everything as individuals.” In the time of Napoleon, the questions put to the Sanhedrin (1807), a Jewish assembly convened in France by the emperor, were meant to inquire into Jewish observance and to ascertain whether the commandments of the Jewish religion stood in opposition to loyal citizenship and integration into the French nation. It is quite true that the granting of civil rights to Jews also posed difficult dilemmas and caused fierce arguments within the Jewish community, involving as it did the surrender by the Jews of the autonomous social frameworks that for many generations had been the foundation of the separate Jewish community, and the surrender of juridical and legal decisions according to Jewish law (*halakha*), the Sabbath as the day of rest, kosher food, and marriage within the Jewish community.

There were significant differences, however, between the granting of civil rights to Jews in France and the United States, and

the process of the Jewish emancipation in GERMANY. In the United States, independence and the structure of national life were predicated on severance from the past, on founding the new nation on the basis of equality, and on the separation of church and state, which placed religion in a category that existed alongside the state structure. The different ethnic and national groups, living in a society that allowed much room for pluralism and recognized the right of entities to follow unique and diversified lines of development, were able to integrate into the national body and become partners in it.

This pluralism, to be sure, did not imply a partnership among equals, and from the first the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants dominated. The founders of the United States and their descendants determined the national challenges and norms of behavior and retained in their own hands the central positions of authority and the key economic positions. The problem of slavery confronted the American nation and society, and in its wake the problem of the blacks and the path toward its solution was strewn with internal strife and divisiveness. At times of turmoil, as during the Civil War or when the loss of hegemony by the ruling class and threats to its norms seemed to be in the offing, portents of antisemitism or restrictions on immigration (that is, quotas) appeared. Such a time of turmoil was the fateful period between the two world wars, when an anti-Jewish tendency appeared on the scene that had grave ramifications for the destiny of the Jews in Europe. Men of stature and influence in American culture, for example Henry Adams and Henry James, expressed antisemitic views in the face of the rapid urbanization and changes in American society that followed the Civil War. The noted anthropologist Madison Grant, in his book *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), openly claimed that the flooding of the United States by great numbers of weak, broken, and mentally deficient people of all races, from the lowest strata of society in the Mediterranean countries and the Balkans to the wretched multitudes from the ghettos of Poland, endangered the American way of life and the “Nordic” racial structure of the people whose ancestors had founded America.



Nazi antisemitic poster in Polish. "The JEW is a swindler. Your only enemy." The tags read (from top to bottom): Meat, Water, Milk, Bread. The text reads: "Stop, dear reader, and see how the Jews cheat you. Instead of meat he [the Jew] grinds a rat; adds filthy water to the milk; and kneads the worm-infested dough with his feet."

After World War I, Henry Ford contributed his money and influence to further the distribution of the PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION in the United States, and the book *The International Jew*, which appeared under his name, helped spread the ideas contained in the *Protocols* throughout the world. American antisemitism often took the form of social separation and rejection—the refusal to accept Jews into exclusive clubs and certain hotels, and the blocking of their paths to senior posts and leading positions in certain companies. Antisemitism was keenly felt in the United States during the twentieth century and was influenced from outside by various forces, including the Nazis. It continued to be felt keenly until after the end of World War II, but it never took on a generally brutal and violent character, and never led to the passage of restrictive national laws specifically against Jews. Even at the height of the Great Depression in the United States,

whose source was the financial crisis that engendered massive unemployment, the Jews were never blamed for the situation, as had happened more than once in Europe during financial and economic collapses in such countries as France and Germany. Indeed, Jews took an active role in the economic recovery that President Franklin D. ROOSEVELT initiated, and his policies had the effect of broadening the spheres of American life in which Jews could participate. At no time did American antisemitism accrue political power as in Europe. The United States represents the kind of government and culture that, through a process of permutation, evolution, and material progress on a vast scale, has succeeded in integrating masses of people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds and cultures without destroying their identities, without oppression, and without abandoning the principles of democracy.

Germany passed through a process different from either the United States or France. A few of the Germans who tried to institute reforms in the social structure of the German states during the time of Napoleon's conquests supported improvement of the Jews' status. After Napoleon's defeat, however, such changes were regarded as part of the order imposed upon Germany by the enemy, and therefore were neither binding nor popular. The stages in the formation of the German nation were not motivated primarily by the adoption of revolutionary ideas advocating social change, but rather by the desire to unify the different parts of the German people into one strong national body. A prevailing goal was to derive inspiration and ideals from the German past and from spiritual and literary movements such as Romanticism, which embraced the traditions of medieval Germany. Whereas the character of the French and American revolutions allowed breadth of opportunity and belief in the perfectibility of man within the new laws and regimes, developments in Germany tended toward the suppression of outcasts and those who were different. The refusal to bestow equal rights in a single package and the fact that it took several generations before the process was fully accomplished also had a restraining influence, and heightened the un-

willingness to accept the equality of the Jews, even when it had been legally granted.

Some well-known German philosophers expressed opposition to the integration of the Jews into the German nation. Among them was Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who enlisted his philosophy for the consolidation of the idea of modern German nationalism. In his view the Jews should be deprived of the right to belong to the German nation. He regarded Christianity as a basic component of German nationalism and asserted that the Jews are a nation within a nation, casting doubt on the possibility of changing the Jews and making them into an organic part of the German people. In Fichte's view, as human beings Jews must be given full rights, but not the privileges of citizenship. He saw only one way to make them worthy of such privileges: "to cut off their heads one night and replace them with new ones, free from all Jewish ideas."

Bruno Bauer, a philosopher and theologian of the Young Hegelian school of thought, published two essays in 1843 advocating that Jews should not be granted emancipation. According to Bauer, who identified with the trend calling for the end of the rule of religion over the thoughts of man, Christianity had arrived at the stage of development in which the state and the public had been freed from the chains of religion. In contrast, Judaism was a static and anachronistic religion, unable to adapt itself to changing times. Accordingly, Jews should not be granted emancipation, or, at least, emancipation should be withheld from them as long as they were not ready to abandon their religious beliefs. In his critique of Bauer, the young Karl Marx opposed the denial of emancipation for Jews. Marx differentiated between political and civil emancipation and human emancipation. The first was one of the distinguishing marks of the new state and freed the citizen from the yoke of state religion, a liberation that would also affect the Jews. The second was a higher state whose purpose it was to do away with the alienation and inequality that divide human groups from one another, especially because of the unequal distribution of wealth. With regard to progress toward full human emancipation, apart from equality as citizens, Marx viewed the Jews as an obstacle belonging entirely to the past; for him, Juda-

ism and its commandments were egotistical. Through the Jew (and also by other means), money became material and gained control over the Christian people. Marx's conclusion was that "the social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from the Jew."

Frenchmen of the generation after the Revolution who had a radical socialist outlook, such as Charles Fourier, Alphonse Toussenel, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, were disappointed in the Revolution for not solving the troubling problems of society, and advocated diverse concepts. Some called for living in communes or cooperative communities (Fourier), while others had anarchic tendencies (Proudhon). Most, however, saw the main evil in the lack of equality in wealth and in the power of capital. Proudhon came out strongly against wealth that was not the product of a man's direct labor, but rather came from the exploitation of fellow men. He did not distinctly define the Jews, but the terms "nation" and "race" in references to Jews appear in his writings, and he saw in them the power behind the inequality and exploitation of society. In his view, "we are given into the hands of the Jews for good or for evil." The Jews, he said, are characterized by their unproductive parasitism, and a world plot connects them in the pursuit of their aims. Toussenel, who belonged to the school of Fourier and did not deal much with the subject of society, excelled in unbridled hatred of the Jews, writing a book titled *The Jews: Kings of the Period*.

From the time of the Congress of Vienna (1815) until the granting of full emancipation to the Jews (1871), expressions of antisemitism never disappeared in Germany. In 1819 the country was swept by the "Hep! Hep!" disturbances (the source of the cry is not fully clear), which caused material and physical damage, but not loss of life. Violently anti-Jewish writings continued to appear, such as those of Hartwig Hundt (known as Hundt-Radowsky), who called for the deportation or destruction of the Jews. Nor was there any lack of demagogues who advocated that the Jews return to their ghettos, wear a special badge, and pay special taxes. Even among the liberals who advocated the improvement of society, national unity, and changes in the government, there were severe critics of Jews



Nazi antisemitic poster in Polish, "Soviet Pyramid." The workers and peasants at the base of the pyramid are crushed by the Soviet army men above them, who, in turn, support the Jewish "bankers" conferring with Stalin.

and Judaism. Their accusations were based on analysis of the phenomena and characteristics ascribed to the Jews; the conclusions they arrived at sometimes generated wide repercussions, and in general constituted an attempt to halt the process of emancipation. The dominant personality and influence among them was the Heidelberg theologian Eberhard-Heinrich Paulus. Paulus engaged in a debate with Gabriel Riesser, a Jewish intellectual and ardent fighter for emancipation who played an important role in the Pan-German Parliament, held in Frankfurt during the revolutions of 1848-1849. According to Riesser, the Jews were a religious group similar to other religious groups. Paulus, how-

ever, saw Christianity as a religion that brings the believer to moral behavior, whereas Judaism is based on cult and on mechanical and abused ceremonies. He would grant equal rights only on condition that the Jewish commandments be abrogated. Paulus also maintained that Christian messianism had a universal appeal, whereas for the Jews messianism meant national salvation.

Notwithstanding these negative views, this period was marked by progressive and continuous evolution toward emancipation. The breaking up of the corporative frameworks, the desire to establish a unified German state, and developments in the economy and culture all contributed to this trend. Jews who left the ghettos achieved significant success in finance (the best-known example is the house of Rothschild) and in intellectual endeavors. Personalities like Heinrich Heine and the essayist and publicist Karl Ludwig Borne, although converts to Christianity, were influenced by Judaism in their creativity. An integral part of the progression toward equality was the abrogation of various prohibitions, such as those that forbade Jews to live in certain places or that limited them to certain professions. In 1830 the *Landtage* (state parliaments) enacted liberating laws, and a decisive stage was reached in the discussions and conclusions at the Pan-German Parliament. Jews and many gentiles believed that equality and the integration of the Jews into the German nation were inevitable and only a matter of time, and that the voices of the opponents and vilifiers, in the words of Borne, were no more than the last lingering shadows of the Middle Ages that were seeking to obscure—in vain—the dawn of a new age.

During the 1870s the granting of equal citizenship and legal rights to Jews was achieved throughout western and central Europe. With the completion of the cycle of emancipation, which appeared to signal general agreement for the integration of the Jews into the nation, antisemitism paradoxically appeared in a new form, which would bring disaster upon the Jews. It was not the antisemitism of the opponents of emancipation, even though that opposition, with its ancillary argumentation and demagoguery, was a factor in keeping antisemitism in the public

eye. Neither was it a question of disappointment at the "reform" of the Jews (that is, at the attempt to end their isolation and wean them away from religious tradition, which many regarded as a precondition for emancipation), even though many who felt that improvements in the Jewish situation would lead to a general desertion from Judaism found their expectations unfulfilled.

The antisemitism in its new form, as it emerged from the 1870s, moved the allegations against the Jews and the concept of their innate disability into the national, and indeed the universal, social and political sphere. The Jews ceased being a separate category, judged through their behavior and deeds; the new antisemitism (the old antisemitism in its new guise) became a general ideology, a *Weltanschauung* with its own existence and at times without a real connection to Jews or Jewish society. It claimed to clarify the complex and troubling problems of modern man and to reveal the sources of economic crisis and poverty, of political conflicts, of societal ferment and war, and, in fact, of all the sicknesses that trouble mankind. The old antisemitism, in the view of the advocates of the new version, had been merely an impulsive emotion, whereas the new antisemitism was regulated and rational, based on objective scientific analysis that discovered the Jewish role in society. The very name of antisemitism, with which the advocates of the new version chose to define their ideology, was meant to emphasize the difference between it and earlier Jew-hatred. The name "antisemitism," which was taken from the Greek, was also intended to endow the ideology with a sort of scientific basis. In actuality, antisemitism was never directed against other "Semites," such as the Arabs, but only against the Jews. The new version of antisemitism was destined, in the twentieth century, to play a major and destructive role in the lives of Jews and all mankind. The German scholar Reinhard Rürup has stated that "Germany is the cradle of both the movement and the term antisemitism," from which they spread through countries in western, central, and eastern Europe. The question of whether one type of antisemitism spread generally, or whether indigenous varieties sprouted in each locality,

has yet to be answered conclusively. It is reasonable to assume, however, that both general external and particular internal factors led to its spread.

It may be asked whether there was any connection between the early antisemitism, which from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1870s was marked by a significant retreat, and the antisemitism that emerged in Europe and became one of the dominant elements in the political, economic, and social struggle from the 1870s onward. Some have addressed themselves to this issue, such as the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who tried to understand the meaning of the new antisemitism of the years from 1870 to 1944. He set forth his ideas in *Réflexions sur la question juive* (1946; published in English as *Anti-semitism and Jew*, 1965). Sartre wrote that the essence of antisemitism is not grounded in historical fact relating to the Jews, but in the concept that the forces of history have created for themselves of the Jew. He emphasized that it is not the antisemite's personal experience with Jews that evokes his hatred toward them, but rather his tendency to see the source of his own personal failings in his abstract perception of Jews. Psychologists explain this type of antipathy in times of stress as a projection of the frustration of the modern anonymous masses and the consequences of this frustration on an object outside their circle. The Jew is the available scapegoat and meets these basically paranoid needs.

Hannah Arendt severed the new antisemitism from its past and claimed that in modern times, the Jews lost the support of rulers and protective regimes during and after the stage of the formation and acceptance of nationalism. As a result, the Jews were left with only the prop of money, which caused antipathy and left them vulnerable to attack. The importance Arendt ascribes to the Jewish role in the creation of the new antisemitism is schematic and simplistic and is not difficult to refute.

It is clear that even if the components of antisemitism in its new form are diverse and emanate from a new viewpoint, the old characterization of the Jew and the accompanying stereotypes have both played a part in the way that individuals and society as a whole conceive of the Jew. Moreover, even

before the advent of political and racial antisemitism in Europe, the antisemitic factions, organizations, and claims, which at first had only a marginal influence, contained the potential to accrue power and momentum.

An important element in the new antisemitism is the identification of the Jew with modernism, capitalism, and urbanization. Social strata that were harmed by the swift changes in Germany during the last decades of the nineteenth century, as well as religious fundamentalists and conservatives, saw in modernization, capitalism, and urbanization a break away from tradition, the destruction of the traditional way of life, and the abolition of the framework that provided Germany with stability and its essential uniqueness. The Jews were regarded as the pioneers of change and the breakdown in tradition, and were seen as the principal beneficiaries of the new system. This found expression in the nationalist political *völkisch* movement, whose leading representatives opposed the industrialism and secularism that characterize modernity and that, in their view, undermine the foundations of the spiritual and cultural uniqueness of the German people. In the writings of advocates of the *völkisch* movement, much responsibility, or even the main responsibility, for undermining the German way of life can be ascribed to the Jews. The well-known biblical and Near Eastern scholar Paul Lagarde, who stood fast by his religious views and who hated liberalism, saw in the Jews a foreign and unifying force that bore within itself the germ of decay. In his view, "with germs one should not argue"; rather, they must be destroyed. Lagarde did not put forth a fully developed racist concept, but in his writings and in his refusal to consider conversion a solution to the "Jewish problem" can be seen the seeds of racism. One of his disciples, Ludwig Schemann, disseminated in Germany the ideas of the French racist Count Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau.

Another *völkisch* thinker was the cultural scholar Julius Langbehn, who was a generation younger than Lagarde and was active after the emancipation. Langbehn was an unstable megalomaniac who often changed his

place of residence and area of study, yet he possessed great talent and intellectual curiosity. At one point he decided to devote himself to repairing the image of German culture, and his publications on the subject were widely read. Langbehn was willing to come to terms with traditional Jews, but he viciously lambasted the assimilated Jews. He opposed conversion, which he saw as merely a Jewish attempt at camouflage.

The challenge to emancipation focused on the negative characteristics and influence of Jews who became Germans by their own national self-identification. According to antisemitic arguments, these Jews were not satisfied with equality and did not integrate quietly into a working society. Instead, they aspired to take over wide areas of important but nonproductive branches of the economy, and to penetrate into science, art, literature, and the press, where they caused damage. According to their critics, the Jews destroyed good taste in Germany by engaging in imitation and dilettantism. Since their creativity was not deep-rooted and since they had no real contact with their new surroundings, they turned to radicalism and nihilism, which undermine patriotism and the national resilience. Even a composer of the stature of Richard Wagner, who during the revolutions of 1848-1849 was a radical liberal, changed his views; in his essay *Das Judentum in der Musik* (The Jews in Music), he accused the Jews of lacking original creativity and destroying artistic taste. Wagner's racism never reached full formulation. It was his son-in-law, Houston Stewart CHAMBERLAIN, who gave RACISM its character as a crystallized concept and lived to have contact with Hitler. Eventually, other intellectuals were harnessed to serve racism. Among them were scholars as eminent as the Nobel prize-winning physicist Philipp LENARD, who distinguished between "German physics" and "Jewish physics," the latter represented by Albert EINSTEIN and his theories.

The claim that the Jews were "a nation within a nation" was expanded. The more moderate of the new antisemites complained that the Jews had not fulfilled expectations and had not ended their national separatism. They did not identify unreservedly with the

nation in the midst of which they lived, and they continued to maintain ties of communication and solidarity with Jews in other lands. According to the extreme antisemites, the Jews have an international leadership that functions in a secret fashion, similar to that of the FREEMASONS, intentionally entering the host nation and deliberately weaving a plot to take over other nations and eventually the entire world. The methods with which the Jews work, united in their secret international plot, are diverse and changing, but the Jews are not particular about the methods they use and keep their eyes on their final goal, of imposing their dominion over all mankind. In pursuit of this goal the Jews have concentrated capital in their hands and have turned it into a tool to promote their machinations. They have sought to inculcate political and social ideas in the guise of capitalism, liberalism, and socialism—ideologies that lead to national disintegration and direct men toward false universalistic concepts in the spirit of Judaism. Substantially there is no difference between these ideologies, because all of them are extensions of the one strategic plan of the Jews. Not only the traditional Jews but also the modern assimilated Jew is subject to the secret leadership, according to the antisemites, and supposed internal differences of opinion among the Jews are only a pretense to mislead non-Jewish society; the Talmudic dictum that the gentile world is to be hated must be followed by all Jews.

Blood libels (the accusation that Jews kill gentiles to obtain their blood for Jewish rituals) became numerous in the countries of western, central, and eastern Europe. Most infamous was the 1882 blood libel in the Hungarian village of Tisza Eszlar. During the trial the name of August Rohling, a professor of theology from Prague, also gained world attention. In 1871 Rohling published *Der Talmudjude* (The Talmud Jew) and offered to appear before a court to prove, using Talmudic sources, his claim that Jews use blood for ritual purposes. When it was demonstrated in Rohling's presence that he did not know how to read Talmudic sources and that his words were nothing but an evil libel, Rohling was forced to back down. As happens in such

libels, however, sensational rumors proved to be harder than the truth. The blood libel of which Mendel Beilis was accused in Russia and for which he was tried in 1913 also received worldwide publicity. Eventually the judges freed Beilis, but as in the Tisza Eszlar case, blood libel as such was not categorically denounced as a baseless invention.

According to extreme antisemites, a Jewish leadership working deep underground was orchestrating a long-range plan. At times certain institutions and organizations were said to be manifestations of this leadership. Among them were the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a Jewish philanthropic organization based in France that was devoted to spreading enlightened education to Jews in the Balkans, Asia, and North Africa. The Zionist Congresses were also tied to the leadership. In 1868 a novel, *Biarritz*, was published by Hermann Goedsche, under the pseudonym Sir John Redcliffe (Retcliffe). Its first chapter describes a secret meeting of the twelve Jewish tribes at night in the Prague Jewish cemetery. There, with the aura of an esoteric ceremony accompanied by prayer, oaths, and fire, those present survey the progress made by the Jews in their efforts to take over the Christian world, and formulate their future plans. This chapter went through different variations, all of which were presented as authentic. Redcliffe, who in reality was a post-office clerk, was described as a courageous man who had uncovered a Jewish plot that threatened the entire Christian world. In 1871 in Basel, Osman Bey's pamphlet *The Jewish Conquest of the World* was published, putting forth similar fabricated ideas.

Other variations on these themes appeared in different forms, but the version that became most important and influential, and that still continues to exert influence, is the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The *Protocols*, which were disseminated in Russia from the beginning of the twentieth century, were a transparent plagiarism of a parody of Napoleon III by Maurice Joly, a long-forgotten French author. They were initially used by the Russian secret police to deflect political unrest toward the Jews. Remarkably, the *Protocols*, which were taken to the West by Russian emigrés at the time of the Bolshevik



An illustration from *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heide und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid* (Don't Trust a Fox in the Chicken Coop or a Jew at His Word), a children's book by Elvira Bauer published in Germany by Stürmer Verlag in 1936. [A Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York]

Revolution, reached Germany and other lands and were accepted by many as the truth. Even the *London Times* tended for a while to give credence to the *Protocols*, although later it exposed them as a forgery.

The success of the *Protocols* and similar works can be better understood against the background of the widely held accusation that Jews were among the leaders of the wave of revolutions that swept Europe during and after World War I; in particular, that they were among the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution. The participation of Jews in these revolutions was prominent: personalities such as Leon Trotsky in Russia, Béla Kun in Hungary, and Rosa Luxemburg and Kurt Eisner in Germany were born Jews, although their politics and actions estranged them

from Judaism. Nevertheless, their Jewish origins and those of other revolutionaries were emphasized everywhere, and aroused suspicions among many who had not previously been antisemitic.

Racial ideas also played a part in secular political antisemitism. The earlier vague antisemitism was superseded by claims supposedly based on objective scientific criteria. With the aid of caricatures projecting the ideas of ugliness, greed, and promiscuity, the image of the ugly Jew became established. The division of mankind by race, for which Gobineau had sought a basis, was originally conceived to give a foundation to the idea that the aristocracy, which had been displaced by the French Revolution, was really superior.

These ideas did not take root in France, but they did succeed in Germany. Those who hoped to divert dislike of Jews into a racial track found a sympathetic chord among many Germans. The Jews were virtually the only ethnic group dispersed throughout Europe on which an alien racial identity was pinned. The racial perspective allowed a mark to be placed on the Jew after all the other signs of stereotypical differences had virtually disappeared; the Jew now dressed like a German or Frenchman, behaved like a German or Frenchman, spoke impeccable German or French, and became a patron of music, art, and literature. The Jew-haters felt the need to transfer their hatred to an intangible and mysterious sphere, and racism fit the bill; if the Jew had characteristics that could not be changed, then it was justifiable to refuse to grant him equality. When the evil in the Jew, in all its aspects, was based on biology and blood, there was nothing different that was visible or could be erased; the cause was deeper. This held true for all Jews, whether traditional, assimilated, or converted to Christianity. In fact, the danger was seen as greater when Jews had acquired the language and outer appearance of Germans and had professedly left their own religion and race than when their Jewishness was transparent to all.

It is not incidental that an antisemite like Theodor Fritsch, who was known as a professional and eclectic antisemite (that is, one who was ready to adopt any and every reason or idea that would further his cause), in the end became a racist. Patriotism, which in the Second Reich (1871 to 1918) became strident nationalism, embodied by blood, war, and steel, reinforced by rapid industrialization, and translated into imperial designs, derided and detested tolerance and the values of equality. Heinrich von Treitschke, the ambitious historian and publicist of the Second Reich, who himself was a liberal in the days when liberalism flourished, claimed that the Jews were not completely loyal to Germany. He used the phrase "Die Juden sind unser Unglück" ("The Jews are our misfortune"). His young pupil Heinrich von Class, who was active in reactionary right-wing circles during the Weimar Republic, went a step further, adopting racism and calling for the pas-

sage of discriminatory laws against the Jews.

Adolf Stöcker, a lay preacher who rose from humble beginnings to become the imperial court chaplain, was saturated with an anti-Judaism that was rooted in religion, and he imparted a public dimension to anti-Judaism. Stöcker tried to establish a Christian Socialist party to stop the growing Social Democrats, but when religious arguments did not work, he turned to antisemitism as a means of garnering mass support. Stöcker's antisemitism was still somewhat restrained, but that of Eugen Dühring, an eccentric philosopher with his own personal theory of socialism and a critic of the Christian church, was not restrained in the least. Dühring spoke clearly of a Jewish race that was totally evil. He advocated the abrogation of the Emancipation and the ousting of Jews from various spheres of life, and, finally, he viewed the deportation of the Jews as a desirable solution.

In periods of crisis, or in the face of failure or public outbursts of anger, an accusing finger was pointed at the Jews. Such was the case at the time of the *Gründerkrise* (the Founders' Crisis), which followed the prosperity after the victory over France in 1871 and the flow of reparations money; that prosperity led to the growth of speculative investments and profits, which in turn caused a crisis. Jews were at times represented as the cause of a calamity that at the same time struck other countries besides Germany. Men like Otto Glagua, who was among those badly hurt by the financial collapse, were not satisfied with accusing the Jews; they publicly aired the theory that Jews by nature turn to business, capital, and the stock market. In other words, said Glagua, the Jewish role in society is that of an unproductive parasite. Politicians and parties arose that exploited the circumstances and used antisemitism to pave their way to the Reichstag. In 1881, 300,000 people signed a petition calling for the expulsion of Jews from government jobs. During the 1880s in Germany antisemitic congresses were held that supposedly were international, but in reality the only non-Germans in attendance were from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and their position was dictated by the Germans.

In the 1890s the antisemitic parties in Ger-

many were in a state of decline. However, the right-wing conservative parties incorporated antisemitism as part of their platforms. With signs of defeat in World War I becoming apparent, strident antisemitism again became prominent. During the war, rumors were rife that Jews were not serving at the front but had infiltrated noncombat positions, and military leaders ordered that the matter be checked. Jews were also accused of fostering defeatism in the rear during the revolutionary period of 1918 and 1919. The frustration that came in the wake of the collapse of the war effort, the economic crisis during the Weimar Republic, and the revulsion felt by many toward the republic all engendered anti-Jewish ideas and feelings.

Political antisemitism was not only a German phenomenon but embraced all of Europe, and, as mentioned, it struck roots in France. There, during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Jewish issue was a component of the long debate between the republicans and royalists. The Dreyfus affair of the 1890s is seen as an anti-Jewish campaign that made a profound and stormy imprint on Europe. Eduard Drumont, the author of the book *La France juive* (Jewish France), whose anti-Jewish activities began before the Dreyfus affair and reached their apogee during it, has been appraised by the historian Jacob Katz as having expressed views as extreme and severe as those of the Nazis during the Weimar Republic.

Drumont raised the cry "France for the French." He wrote prolifically, published antisemitic books and newspapers, and was widely read. For a short time he also coordinated the antisemitic faction in the French parliament and led an antisemitic political party. French antisemitism sometimes dovetailed with the anti-Freemasonry that was fostered by the Catholic church. The connection between the Freemasons and the Jews did not exist to the same extent in Germany because there, Jews as a rule had not been admitted to Masonic lodges. Some believe that the reason why antisemitism in France did not reach the level of its German counterpart was that the Jews in France comprised a smaller percentage of the population than in Germany; and when the regions of Alsace

and Lorraine were transferred to Germany after the German victory over France in 1871, a focal point and main arena of French antisemitism disappeared. In France several financial scandals contributed to antisemitism, such as the collapse of the Union Générale bank, which was under the aegis of Catholics and was a competitor of Jewish banks; the collapse of the stock of the Panama Canal company; and several instances of corruption in which Jews as well as some well-known members of the social elite and the regime were involved. However, racial Darwinist ideas were never widely accepted in France. In general, the "Jewish question" was not at the core of any of the powerful political factions. The "Jewish question" in France was often an issue of the differences between Jews: the Jews who had been in France for a long time, were rooted in its culture, and had contributed to the French war effort, as contrasted to recently arrived foreign Jews. The latter were the main object of discrimination and antipathy, especially between the two world wars. Léon Blum, as the leader of the Socialist party, and at times the premier, was a target for incitement and outbursts owing to his Jewish background, yet it is doubtful whether in this period a Jew in Germany could have risen to a similar position. The closest, Walther RATHENAU, who filled various crucial posts in Germany during World War I and whose outlook tended toward the right, was assassinated in 1922, not long after he became Germany's foreign minister.

The situation of Jews in states with one dominant nationality, like Germany and France, must be distinguished from that in states where the Jews were one of many large minorities. In AUSTRIA, the Germans after World War I lost the dominance they had held in the former large Austro-Hungarian Empire, and moreover remained isolated from other Germans. Antisemitism was strong there, with foundations both in popular culture and in a nationalist ideology. In MEIN KAMPF, Adolf HITLER claimed that VIENNA was for him a school in antisemitism. The effective and popular mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, was (in the late nineteenth century) the first person of high rank in the Austro-Hungarian Empire who openly ex-

pressed antisemitic ideas and knew how to sell them to the Catholic majority. Another antisemitic leader who influenced Hitler, according to the latter's writings, was Georg von Schönerer, an advocate of Pan-Germanism who was close to the nationalist racist concept but whose influence in Austrian politics was limited. Although antisemitism increased and was directed primarily toward Jews who came to Vienna from eastern Europe, it never played an important role in internal Austrian politics or Austrian foreign relations between the two world wars. Antipathy toward the Jews attained a brutal, totally unrestrained expression with the ANSCHLUSS in 1938, and more than one of the Nazi leaders who were extreme in the persecution and murder of the Jews were of Austrian origin.

In HUNGARY, and to some extent in POLAND during the 1860s and 1870s, the trend was to bring the Jews closer to the nationalist movement within the multinational state structure, to make them a part of the population that identified with Hungarian or Polish nationalist aims. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, political antisemitism with an ideological tone increased in both countries. Both had long-standing, brutal, and vulgar antisemitic traditions, as in Germany. In both, Jews constituted a relatively high percentage of the urban population and controlled a significant proportion of trade, finance, and the professions. Since the Jews were considered outsiders, and since they themselves often maintained their uniqueness and separateness from the gentiles (in particular in Poland and ROMANIA), to a certain extent there was in these countries a real conflict or problem with regard to the Jews. The dominant antisemite in Hungary before World War I, Victor Istoczy, defined himself as an advocate of sociopolitical antisemitism, and spoke of "defense" against the Jews. He was in contact with prominent antisemites in Germany and took part in the first antisemitic congress, in Dresden. Istoczy spoke of "racism," but it seems that racism did not play a significant role in his anti-Jewishness.

In Poland during the 1890s a national democratic movement, that of the Endeks, arrived on the scene and adopted a platform emphasizing antisemitism. The party's au-

thoritarian leader and ideologist, Roman Dmowski, was an aggressive antisemite, and at times wielded great influence in the party. As early as 1907 Dmowski called the Jews an ethnic entity that was foreign to the Polish mentality, was not able to assimilate, and was likely to spread foreign and repulsive ways among the Poles. Therefore, he maintained, the assimilation of the Jews, except in a few cases, was not desirable. Later, Dmowski and his circle asserted that the Jews had allied themselves with Poland's historical enemies (Russia, Prussia, and Austria-Hungary) and had derived benefit therefrom. Moreover, he declared, they bore much of the responsibility for Poland's sorry state. In 1912 Dmowski organized an anti-Jewish boycott, and from then on the economic component in political anti-Jewish propaganda—"Jewish Bolshevism"—became more prominent in the party's platform and policy. Between the world wars, antisemitism became a significant component of public and government opinion.

Except for Czechoslovakia, the situation of the Jews deteriorated in the countries of central and eastern Europe that had been created after the end of World War I. Although these states signed minority treaties, it was not within their power to uphold them, especially with regard to protecting the Jews' rights. Moreover, the desire of the largest ethnic group in each state to impose its own stamp on the country harmed all the minorities, and the Jews as a weak minority suffered more than others. The Romanians succeeded in abrogating the rights of Jews in the territories that Romania had annexed, and conducted a fierce anti-Jewish propaganda campaign. During the White Terror in Hungary (1919–1920) the Hungarians avenged themselves on the Jews for their alleged role in the revolution, which was led by Béla Kun. Hungary became the first country to invoke a *numerus clausus* (quota) in institutes of higher education, restricting the number of Jews who could study in them. In Poland, anti-Jewish policy was applied primarily in the economic sphere. The economic difficulties that struck the countries of central and eastern Europe strengthened anti-Jewish attitudes. For the most part, antisemitism in these countries was not racial or biological.



"Der ewige Jude" (The Eternal [or Wandering] Jew), a poster for the 1937 antisemitic exhibition arranged by the Nazis in Munich. The exhibition was also mounted in Vienna, on August 2, 1938. The text of the poster reads: "A large political exhibit in the library building of the Deutsche Museum in Munich from November 8, 1937. Open daily 10:00 to 21:00."

Among other reasons, the deep religiosity prevailing in them did not permit that kind of racist antisemitism to spread, and the relative isolation of the Jews prevented a search for ways of separating them out.

In the second half of the 1930s, after the 1933 Nazi rise to power, open and strident antisemitism received a great boost and legitimation as an acceptable policy. In Hungary and Romania fascist parties with a clear antisemitic tone were active. In Poland the right-wing parties and (after the death of the authoritative leader, Józef Piłsudski) the po-

litical camp in power supported a mass exodus of Jews. The extreme rightist movements wanted to speed up such an exodus by using violence and pogroms. The governing bloc, on the other hand, wanted to achieve this goal by political means. Hungary saw itself as an ally of Germany and a partner in territorial revisionism, and in 1938 and 1939 it passed antisemitic and racial laws. For a while in Romania pillaging, violence, and pogroms took place under government auspices.

The position of these peoples and nations during the period of Nazi rule and occupation is a separate and important chapter. The Poles did not take an active part in the annihilation of the Jews, but the dominant attitude of the population and the underground was one of indifference during the murder of the Jews, most of which, through no fault of the Poles, was carried out on their soil. The Romanians participated actively in the mass murder, but in the last stages of the war they recoiled from handing over Jews for total destruction. In Hungary the situation of the Jews during most of the war years was relatively tolerable, but with the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944 and the beginning of deportations to extermination camps, the Hungarian authorities helped in the work of annihilation, and much of the Hungarian population also played a shameful role.

Russian antisemitism has special characteristics. For centuries Russia was closed off to Jews. Jews were concentrated in the western district, which the tsarist empire had annexed from Poland and Romania. Stringent laws prevented Jews from leaving the area known as the Pale of Settlement to settle in the large cities of central Russia. The authorities attempted to break down Jewish separateness through administrative measures. For a long time antisemitism in Russia was government policy, and only small groups of Jews were permitted to play any part in the nation's economic development. Radical intellectuals viewed the antisemitism of the masses of peasants as a sign of their political awakening. The wave of pogroms that swept Russia during the 1880s, even when initiated not by the government but by extremist organizations close to it, was not opposed by the

regime. These developments spurred the emigration of large numbers of Jews from Russia to countries overseas, especially to the United States. Only after the February 1917 revolution were Russian Jews granted equal rights. The wave of emigrés that left Russia after the 1917 revolution contributed to the spread of antisemitic ideas in the countries where they took refuge. Between the two world wars, antisemitism in the Soviet Union was illegal, and therefore hidden. The roles filled by individual Jews in the Soviet regime contributed to a new kind of antisemitism, one with new motives, which during World War II and the Holocaust had a deadly effect in the Nazi-occupied areas of the Soviet Union. In the opinion of some historians, Stalin's campaign against the old Bolsheviks was not free of an anti-Jewish motive.

In Germany, political antisemitism was first and foremost ideological in nature, claiming that the Jew played a key role in the confrontation between universalist philosophies and in current social and political conflicts. The brutality and violence of pogroms and persecutions that marked antisemitism in eastern Europe were not, at the beginning, part of German political antisemitism. However, the future would teach that a theory of racial antisemitism, which did not advocate force but rather spoke of "rational" solutions to the "Jewish question" as an answer to the problems of the nation and the entire world, contained within it sparks that would ignite a raging fire.

The division of people into races seemed to concur with the Darwinian interpretation of natural selection. It led to the conclusion that natural selection in nature (which balances or provides parameters for propagation, and improves through adaptation and survival those better suited to their surroundings) does not play a role in human society only because of artificial human intervention. Such intervention disrupts the process of evolution, which is based on competition and the elimination of the weak and unsuccessful. It is clear that this conclusion clashes with concepts that are rooted in religions ascribing to humans a special status as having been created in God's image.

A major place in the development of racism in Germany belongs to Houston Stewart

Chamberlain, who added to it the dimension of historical evolution and the struggle within that evolution. Chamberlain was an Englishman who became Germanized and believed that he had a mission to the German people. According to Chamberlain, the Jews had declined over time. Neither King David nor Jesus was Jewish, and the great achievements ascribed to the Jews had actually been accomplished by gentiles. On the other hand, Chamberlain said, the Germans had developed into the elite Aryan race, and they enjoyed a spiritual singularity that enabled them to create great achievements. Chamberlain's book *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century) was written to describe and explain this evolution and the racial struggle conducted throughout history. It was also written to make the Germans aware of the geographic expansion they deserved, and of the enemies surrounding them.

In Germany, racism, more than any other theory (aside from nationalism), was the substance of NATIONAL SOCIALISM. National Socialism did not adopt one anti-Jewish line, while abandoning the others. The authorities of the Third Reich were faced with the challenge of defining who was an Aryan and determining who was a Jew. They never attempted to define a person's race by means of elements in his blood, the shape of his skull or nose, his hair color or body type, and so on, realizing that such criteria would undoubtedly lead to many Nazis being defined as Jews and many Jews being considered pure Aryans. Therefore the Nazis turned to religion as the measurement of race, even though Hitler had claimed many times that the Jews did not constitute a religion but a race, and that it was race which determined their identity as Jews. The religious criteria that were instituted required that a check be made of the religious affiliation of persons who had abandoned Judaism or had intermarried. Some of the MISCHLINGE (people of mixed German and Jewish ancestry) were classified with the Jews, although they belonged to families that were German by any definition.

Long before the Nazi rise to power in Germany, it became clear that providing basic education to the masses and granting them

political rights would not automatically strengthen liberalism, democracy, and mutual understanding among men and nations, as liberal and socialist circles had hoped and conservative nationalists had feared. It turned out that the superstitions and prejudices absorbed by popular culture over the course of generations had a firm hold on the people's soul and consciousness. Alongside innovative and progressive trends, another direction began to make headway, which opposed internationalism and socialism and claimed to have found the solution for the problem of the underprivileged in a national framework. This new direction, without being revolutionary in the accepted sense, manifested dynamism—albeit a nationalist dynamism—and the ability to capture and hold the imagination of the people. For the most part, antisemitism was an inseparable or dominant element in that trend and its motivation.

It has not been substantiated that antisemitism affected the entire German nation or even that the majority of Germans adopted an actively antisemitic outlook, and it would be wrong to make such a claim. From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1870s, emancipation and the ideas of liberalism had gained momentum in Germany and had made constant progress (which the antisemites and supporters of the old regime sought to stop). This situation changed, however, during the Second Reich. The liberal movement, which had come to be largely identified with Jews and which protected Jewish rights, weakened. Jews and non-Jews who opposed antisemitism had to organize in order to safeguard the rights already granted, and they were being put more and more on the defensive. The Social Democrats regarded Jew-hatred as an element undermining their ideological basis and found antisemitism to be the "socialism of fools," as the Social Democrat leader, August Bebel, put it. This recognition notwithstanding, the socialist camp tried not to be identified as defending the Jews, a position viewed as unpopular, and socialist propaganda was not above mentioning the connection that existed between Jews and capitalism.

Political antisemitism was a sign of the crisis that struck society and nationalism at the

end of the nineteenth and in the first decades of the twentieth century. Countries in which democracy was rooted and flourishing—such as Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian nations—were not hurt much by the various radical movements and by antisemitism. The other countries, however, suffered great turmoil. The interwar period is regarded by many historians as an era in which fascism spread all over Europe. Yet these scholars tend to differentiate between National Socialism, which had antisemitism at the core of its ideology, and fascism in Italy and other countries of western Europe. The latter for a long time rejected antisemitism, and even when they accepted it, did not adopt racism as a main ideological component.

In Germany, the Jews had been asked to give up many elements of their tradition and organizational pattern in order to be worthy of equal rights and integration into German society. As a result, the greater part of German Jewry passed through a profound metamorphosis. The Jews, primarily urbanized and representing only about one percent of the population, adopted religious reforms that did away with many of their commandments and traditions, changed their marriage habits, and significantly reduced their birth-rate. Many Jews turned to higher education and the professions to which it led, and tried to excel in them. Certain areas of advancement, however, remained closed to them, such as the officers' corps, and higher posts in the academic field and in the government administration. As a result, many Jews became concentrated in certain professions, including law and medicine, and also turned in significant numbers to the natural sciences, the press, and the arts. The number of German Jews who won Nobel prizes was many times greater than their proportion in the population. The Jews' drive to excel and their disproportionate numbers in some professions made them conspicuous and exposed them to suspicion and hatred. To escape from this hatred and to attain positions from which they were barred, many Jews converted; yet even then they did not cease to be Jews in the searching and watchful eyes of their professional rivals and the Jew-haters. In the opinion of sociologists and demogra-



Antisemitic graffiti on a Jewish shopwindow in Germany (1938). The text is written in "pidgin German" to mock the "nonethnic" German Jew. It reads: "Am I not a good German?" [Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz]

phers, the Jews of Germany would have disappeared within a few generations through assimilation and a declining birthrate, and it was only the influx of Jews from the east that slowed down this inevitable decline. Politically, most of the German Jews were liberals, and their first preference was for the further development of liberal policies. With the weakening of liberalism in Germany, the Social Democrats became a reliable barrier against antisemitism. Many Jews voted for the Social Democratic Party and supported it, even though they apparently did not fully identify with its ideology, and as a persecuted and besieged group were only looking for a helping hand. German Jews were great patriots, with a profound love for German culture and the German landscape. Even Orthodox Jews, who would never consider giving up their religious principles, were ardent

German patriots. For many Jews, their world was destroyed when Germany turned its back on them and they found out that their love for their country had been a one-sided, unrequited love.

During the Nazi period "anti-Jewishness" became part of an overall outlook, in several ways. First, it was integral to the Nazi ideology, not as just one among many different concepts, but as a central element. Second, it was considered a powerful and effective propaganda weapon, used to explain all the existing inadequacies and failures and to shore up the opposition to the liberal parliamentary regime. Third, with Hitler's rise to power, anti-Jewish racism became a political component of the means employed by the government to implement its policies—of excluding the Jews from social, cultural, and economic life; separating them, insofar as

possible, from the rest of the population; and, in the end, getting rid of them altogether in all the lands under German control.

Anti-Jewishness in the Nazi period followed the directives laid down by Hitler in the 1920s. It was not based on an emotional approach and did not take the form of outbursts, but constituted a consistent "rational" policy, grounded in legislation. The Nazi anti-Jewishness did not confine itself to any particular set of charges against Jews but made use of all the many and varied antisemitic calumnies and libels that had been thought up over the generations.

At one stage the Nazi state tried to replace the term "antisemitism" with "anti-Jewishness." This was done both for political reasons ("antisemitism" could be considered to apply to Arabs as well as to Jews) and because Jew-hatred was no longer a separate subject, but a fundamental part of a political ideology. Although this effort did not succeed and the term "antisemitism" remained in use, certain new terms did enter circulation, such as "Jewish blood" and, conversely, "German and related blood." The Nazis took pains not to speak of the export of racism, since according to the principles of the Nazi version of that ideology, the different peoples of Europe would not be promised equality and partnership with the German master race. To the extent that the Nazis did try to disseminate and export antisemitism, they did so in the belief that it would help obscure their long-term goals and deflect public attention abroad from the emerging Nazi threat.

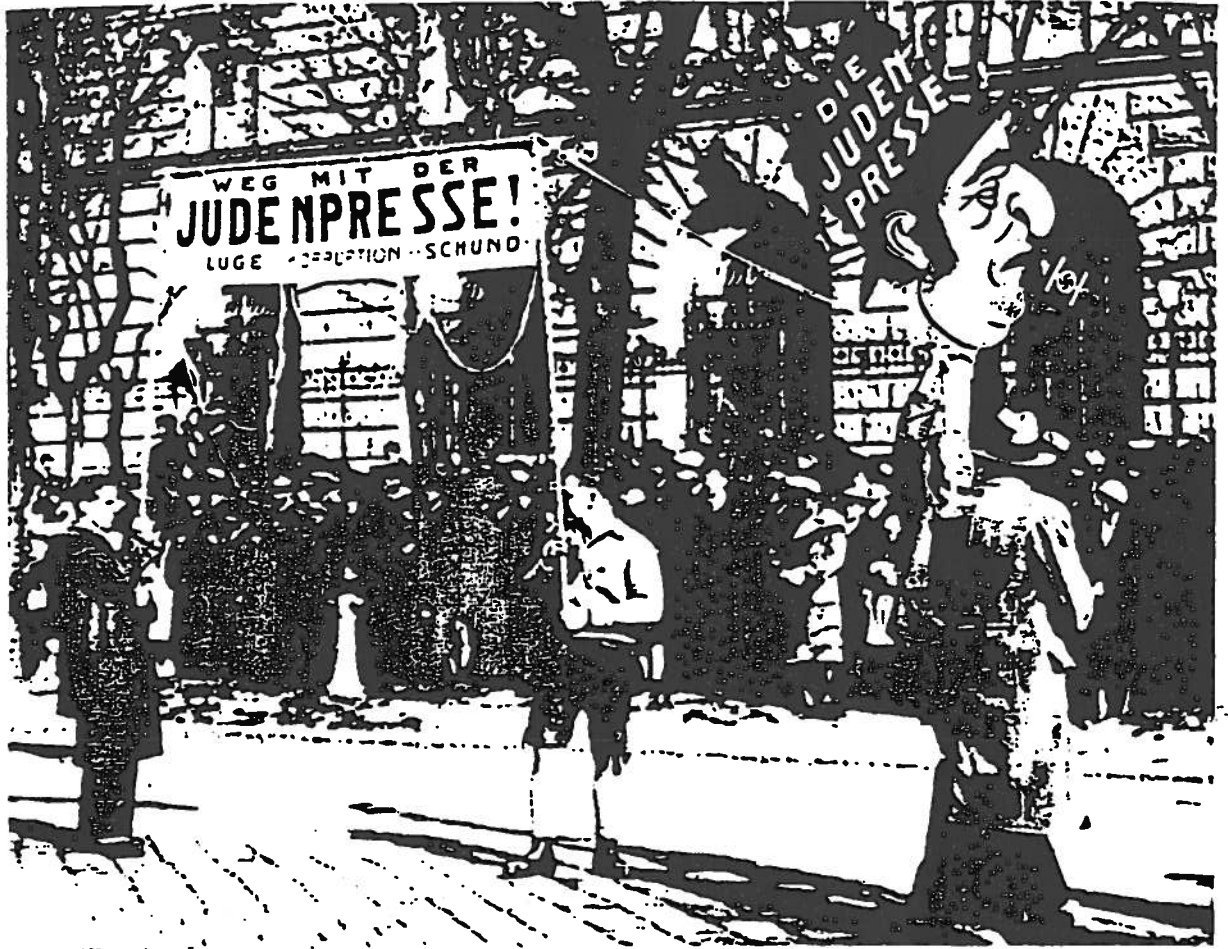
Political antisemitism did not lead directly and inevitably to Nazism, and the Nazi takeover of Germany was not mainly a result of antisemitism. Nazism came to power as a form of German nationalism, aided by the prevailing circumstances of defeat and crisis. Yet antisemitism helped Nazis to gain power and win the hearts of the German masses. Even though the Nazis did not particularly emphasize antisemitism on the eve of their rise to power, it was a well-known element in their creed and action, and was no obstacle to their takeover. Nor did it engender very much opposition from the army, the churches, or German society as a whole.

Between the two world wars antisemitism

was on the increase all over Europe, as an ideology and, in some countries, also as a practical policy applied to the Jews. This development derived from the growing influence of the Third Reich and the various fascist movements, and it was particularly strong in the countries of eastern Europe. The democracies did not accept antisemitism—indeed, they opposed it—but they preferred to downplay their disapproval so that their policies and actions would not be interpreted as a defense of persecuted Jews, since in the Nazi period such a "reputation" was unpopular and considered politically detrimental. In general, the Nazi policies against the Jews caused the Nazis only minor damage in the democratic and liberal countries, and except in extreme instances, such as the KRISTALLNACHT pogrom in November 1938, they did not encounter any real opposition. With the outbreak of the war it became clear that the Nazis were not confining their anti-Jewish policies to the territory of Greater Germany. They applied these policies with increasing severity against the Jews in every place they occupied and in every country where they attained political power and ideological influence.

The "FINAL SOLUTION" may be said to have been the all-out implementation of two closely related tendencies in the Nazi party and the Third Reich's ideology and policy: the Nazis' racist anti-Jewish ideology, which regarded the confrontation with the Jews as a struggle in which there could be no compromise; and the conclusion reached by the Nazis that the threat inherent in "Jewish blood" could be removed only by spilling that blood. The dynamics of the anti-Jewish policies and the relentless escalation of the methods applied by the Nazis reached the point where the only means left to be used was indiscriminate mass murder. It was this combination of ideology and its practical outcome that led to the "Final Solution." Undoubtedly, the crystallization of the diabolic plan was facilitated by the climate of resignation to the Third Reich's anti-Jewish policies and, at times, by the approval and collaboration that the Nazis found nearly everywhere they went, even at the stage of the "Final Solution" itself.

After World War II antisemitism was



An antisemitic parade (late 1930s) in Vienna. Twenty thousand National Socialists demon-

strated against the treaties of St. Germain and Versailles and the "Jewish" press.

greatly weakened in the West, and the Western churches on many occasions admitted the fatal mistake they had made in cultivating the Christian aspects of antisemitism. In the Soviet Union and its satellites, however, strong expressions of antisemitism recurred a few years after the end of the war, and in times of crisis and change antisemitism was once again employed as a tactical tool. Not only was this a denial of the ideas and principles that the Soviet Union and socialism in general had adopted, but it was also a strange paradox. The state and the system that radical antisemites had claimed were a Jewish creation were now turning to the cynical and brutal exploitation of antisemitism. Over the years antisemitism began to appear under the guise of "anti-Zionism." The United Nations gave this development its

blessing in a resolution, passed in November 1975, that equated Zionism with racism. The denial of the Holocaust (see HOLOCAUST, DENIAL OF THE) is also essentially a form of antisemitism, seeking to eradicate the truth in order to permit the resurrection of Jew-hatred as it existed in the past. There have been expressions of antisemitism in countries that have no Jews living in them; one such example was the widespread dissemination of antisemitic literature in Japan in the 1980s.

It is difficult to know or to predict whether, despite these various manifestations, antisemitism is in a process of decline or is only hibernating, waiting for some trauma to strike the world that will revive it and once again make it a powerful factor. Above all, it is clear that the struggle against antisemi-

tism requires eternal vigilance and counteraction, not only to ensure that the genie does not escape from the bottle, but also to excise this disease from the body of mankind.

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ISRAEL GUTMAN

ANTONESCU, ION (1882–1946), Romanian general and statesman; ruler of ROMANIA from 1940 to 1944. In World War I, Antonescu distinguished himself as a member of the general staff, and in 1933 he was appointed its chief. In 1937 and 1938 he was minister of defense in the cabinet headed by Octavian GOGA and Alexandru CUZA, the first Romanian cabinet that was outspokenly antisemitic. Antonescu did not belong to the antisemitic fascist movement headed by Corneliu Codreanu, but he did act as liaison between that movement and the traditional political establishment.

The fall of France in the summer of 1940 shattered Romania's political status, and it was forced to cede large parts of its territory to the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria. During this severe national crisis—which threatened Romania's continued existence as an independent state—Antonescu was ap-

pointed prime minister by Prince Michael. Prior to this appointment, he had been confined on King Carol II's orders to a monastery after blaming the king and the military establishment for not preparing the Romanian army for war.

Upon being appointed prime minister, on September 5, 1940, Antonescu forced King Carol to abdicate in favor of his son Michael. Antonescu, however, was the real ruler. Together with Horia SIMA, chief of the IRON GUARD, Antonescu established the National Legionary Government, whose declared purpose was to draw close to Germany and Italy and to purge Romania of "foreign elements" and "foreign influence." Soon after assuming his post, he met with Hitler and gained his trust and esteem. Fearing that the Red Army was planning to seize the part of Moldavia still left in Romania's hands, Antonescu called on the German army to enter Romania, which it did in October of that year.

Soon after, Antonescu encountered problems with his Iron Guard partners, because of the violent and uncontrolled means they employed in seizing property—including the property of Jews—and in removing officials of the old regime from their posts, actions creating economic chaos and political unrest. In January 1941, the Iron Guard Legionnaires openly rebelled against Antonescu, who with Hitler's help was able to subdue them, henceforth ruling as dictator without setting up his own political party. Antonescu joined Germany in the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 in order to recover BESSARABIA and northern BUKOVINA, which the Soviets had taken from Romania in June 1940. He also occupied TRANSNISTRIA, the considerable area of the Ukraine located between the Dniester and Bug rivers.

When he was in his thirties and serving as a military attaché in London, Antonescu had married a French Jewish woman, whom he later divorced; his stepmother too had been Jewish. Nevertheless, he was imbued with traditional antisemitic views and attitudes. These were based on economic and religious considerations according to which the Jews were exploiters who wanted to control Romania's economy, especially its commercial life, and therefore had to be removed from the villages and from economic positions. Anto-

THE DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

In this unit, we are going to explore anti-Semitism in an in-depth manner. The first step is to go back to our own experiences. Once we have listed the anti-Semitic experiences we have encountered, those that our friends or family have had, or incidents that we have heard about, we can move to the next point.

The second step is to realize that there are different types of anti-Semitism. The sections that follow list and describe varieties of anti-Semitism. NOTE: Some types of anti-Semitism are more common now, other types are only common elsewhere.

Before we explore the different types of anti-Semitism, we want you to keep several questions in mind:

1. Is one type of anti-Semitism worse than another, or are they all equally negative?
2. What type of anti-Semitism is the easiest to handle? Most difficult?
3. Returning to Sartre's definition of a Jew (in the first unit), would you say that there is any positive benefit that can be derived from anti-Semitism, for the Jewish people?

RELIGIOUS ANTI-SEMITISM

JEW AS THE MURDERERS OF JESUS

This is the New Testament. It is from which every Catholic child suckles its faith, its beliefs, its religion, from the age of six until it is confirmed as a teenager.

This New Testament contains 102 basic references to the Hebrew people, every one of them is viciously anti-Semitic.

-Dagobert D. Runes

From the New Testament

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man." When the chief of priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God."

Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief of priests answered, "We have no King but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

-From The Gospel, John: 19

Ritual Murder

One of the most vicious and most persistent of all anti-Semitic slurs has been the charge of ritual murder, also known as the "blood libel". The accusation that Jews required the blood of Christian children for the baking of matzot at Pesach was first levelled in Norwich, England in 1144, and was widely accepted about Jews throughout Europe and Russia. There were periodic accusations of ritual murder throughout the Middle Ages. The last actual trial was held in Russia, between 1911-13. This was the famous case of Mendel Belis, which stirred protests throughout the world. The Belis case was later fictionalized by author Bernard Malamud in his novel, *The Fixer*. It was also made into a movie.

Desecration of the Host

The host is the thin wafer used in the Catholic ceremony of Communion. Catholics believe that when they swallow this wafer and a bit of wine, it is then transformed and becomes the flesh and blood of Jesus. In this way the Catholic individual feels himself physically united with Jesus.

In the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed that the Jews, who supposedly wanted to reenact the suffering of Jesus, would steal these wafers and stab, torture, and burn them. Christian legends tell of the miraculous reactions of the host. On one occasion, it was claimed that when the host was being burned in a stove, angels and doves flew out of the stove and exposed the crime. In another case, when it was pierced, the host reportedly splashed blood on the foreheads of the Jews and left an indelible stain which later marked them as the culprits. On another occasion, when the host was tortured, the claim was made that it transformed into the shape of a baby and whimpered.

POLITICAL ANTI-SEMITISM

Selections from "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion"

...it is indispensable to trouble in all countries the people's relations with their governments so as to utterly exhaust humanity with dissension, hatred, struggle, envy, and even the use of torture, by starvation, by the inoculation of diseases, by want so that the GOYIM see no other issue than to take refuge in our complete sovereignty in money and all else. But if we give the nations of the world a breathing space, the moment we long for is hardly likely ever to arrive.

The Jewish Conspiracy Theory

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion is an elaborate forgery that was first published in Russia in 1905. It claims to be the authentic protocols—"minutes"—of a meeting of Jewish Elders who gathered to set down their secret plan for a conspiracy to take over the world. This idea of a Worldwide Jewish Conspiracy gained wide acceptance, particularly in Germany, after World War I. In America, too, an edition of the Protocols was brought out in the 1920's, sponsored by the millionaire auto-maker Henry Ford. The last European publication of the Protocols was in Spain in 1963; but a new edition came out in Egypt as late as 1970. The idea of a Jewish conspiracy is not dead yet.

...the GOYIM are a flock of sheep, and we are their wolves. And you know what happens when the wolves get hold of the flock....?

...in order to put public opinion into our hands, we must bring it into a state of bewilderment by giving expression from all sides to so many contradictory opinions and for such length of time as will suffice to make the GOYIM lose their heads in the labyrinth and come to see that the best thing is to have no opinion of any kind in matters political.

...we shall so wear down the GOYIM that they will be compelled to offer us international power of a nature that by its position will enable us without any violence gradually to absorb all the State forces of the world and to form a Super-Government.

The Nations of the World VS. Israel

One variety of political anti-Semitism that emerged after 1948, and became increasingly more important after the Six Day War of 1967 is anti-Zionism. The State of Israel has, in effect, been placed in the position of the "Jew" among the nations; and anti-Zionism has become the newer, more "civilized" form of anti-Semitism. In 1975, a compendium of Arab states sponsored a resolution that ended with the phrase "...Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." Using the powerful influence of oil as leverage, the Arab states succeeded in getting this resolution passed in the General Assembly (see below).

*The roll call of the General Assembly vote
approving a resolution equating Zionism with
Racism:*

For (72)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Democratic (Southern) Yemen, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, East Germany, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Juwait, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Soviet Union, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Yugoslavia.

Against (35)

Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, France, West Germany, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Swaziland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay.

Abstaining (32)

Argentina, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burma, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Phillipines, Siera Leone, Singapore, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Zaire and Zambia

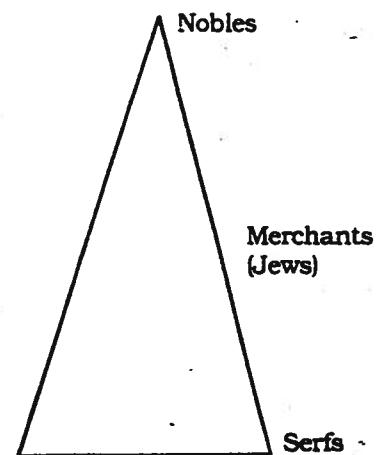
Absent (3)

Romania, South Africa, and Spain

In 1992, the United Nations voted to repeal the earlier resolution equating Zionism with racism.

ECONOMIC ANTI-SEMITISM: THE JEW AS MIDDLEMAN

The Feudal System relied on the interdependence of three groups: the nobles, merchants, and serfs. However, the number of people in each different level was not equal (see diagram); the majority of the people were in the lowest level of society and a very small minority at the highest. It is important to note that the position of the Jews is outside the main framework. The Jew fit in only by taking the role of a go-between or middle man between the highest and lowest levels of the Feudal Society. A position frequently held by Jews was that of collecting taxes from the serfs for the nobles. There were two major disadvantages connected with the occupation: 1. The Jew did not partake of the financial advantages the nobles obtained from the tax money, and 2. The Jew was the object of hatred and abuse from those who paid taxes, because the Jews--not the nobles--were the visible agents who took the money.



Anti Semitism and General Brown

On October 10, 1974, General George S. Brown, the highest ranking military officer in the country, held a news conference at Duke University. In response to a questions on the United States' role in the Middle East, General Brown said,:

"...Jewish influence in this country...is so strong, you wouldn't believe now...They own, you know, the banks in this country, the newspapers. Just look where the Jewish money is."

SOCIAL ANTI-SEMITISM

In Los Angeles

Jews have never been fully accepted into society, even though their legal status is equal. There have been celebrated cases in local schools where admissions quotas restricting the number of Jews have been utilized. Private Country Clubs are another area; the Los Angeles Country Club, for example, still refuses to admit Jews into its membership rolls.

INCIDENT AT THE GRAND UNION HOTEL

A famous example of social anti-Semitism involved Joseph Seligman. During the Civil War, Seligman had raised \$200,000.00 selling Union Bonds in Germany to support the weakened government headed by Abraham Lincoln. William E. Dodd referred to Seligman's achievement as "scarcely less important than the Battle of Gettysburg." His contribution only added to the frustration caused by the incident at the Grand Union Hotel.

"The event which offered dramatic proof occurred at Saratoga. Each summer the cream of American society vacationed at the famous resort. One day in 1877, the Grand Union, the world's largest hotel, turned away Joseph Seligman and his party, declaring it would no longer admit Jews. Seligman, one of America's leading bankers and a power in the Republican Party, wrote a fighting letter to the hotel's owner which brought the issue of anti-Semitism to the front page of the newspaper.

Jews had been kept out of other places before, but quietly. Now hotels and clubs in the Adirondacks boldly advertised, "Hebrews need not apply." Other institutions followed suit. The New York Bar Association blackballed Jews. The Union League Club of New York shut them out. At City College, the fraternities barred Jewish students. Anti-Semitism had come out in the open. Some Americans, proud of a heritage of freedom and equality, protested anti-Semitism. But far more accepted the racist justification of discrimination, and went along with it."

--from Remember The Days by Milton Meltzer (p. 80)

Jewish Self Hatred

What happens when a Jew, facing anti-Semitism all around, begins to believe the lies and slurs of the anti-Semites? The following case is a disturbing and extreme example of Jewish self-hatred.

Daniel Burros seemed only another peculiar youngster who devoted time and energy to the activities of the American Nazi Party. When he committed suicide, a study of his background revealed that he had been born and raised as a Jew. He so desperately wanted to stop being an outsider, He was so frantic to be part of the general culture, that he over identified with the American Nazi Party's hatred of the Jews. He sought to obliterate his Jewish upbringing and joined whole-heartedly with those who hate Jews and wish to see them destroyed. He was a devoted Nazi until he found that he could not keep his origins secret. Then, more loyal to his ideology than to his very life, he killed himself. Surely, this is the ultimate in self-hatred; one would rather die than be Jewish. This feeling, is the Jewish version of the psychoanalytic death principle. If, then, there is some self-hatred in most modern Jews, we carry within us a pressure, great or small, toward self-annihilation. Until we face it, and overcome it, we cannot hope to live wholly and well.

As a Jew, one can never truly be a person as long as he looks at himself with the eyes of those who hate him. Every Jew appropriating even the best of this civilization must sooner or later come to terms with the scandal, the disgrace of his Jewishness.

From The Mask Jews Wear, by Rabbi Eugene Borowitz

Conclusion

Whenever we hear the terms, anti-Semite, anti-Zionist, or anti-Jewish, we basically know what is meant: a person or group has negative feelings about all Jews. However, one of the points we have made throughout this section is that the type of anti-Semitism is determined by the psychological need of the anti-Semite.

The terms used to describe the hatred of the Jews also reflect the type of need that is being met. Here we will point out some of the more subtle distinctions between the different terms.

JUDEOPHOBIA: This term that is no longer used widely. It points to the fear of the Jews because of their strangeness and refusal to assimilate into non-Jewish society. The general term now used to emphasize fear of the unknown is Xenophobia.

ANTI-SEMITISM: This is the most frequently used term. It derives its origin from racial distinctions. In fact, the word "Semite" suggests not only Jews, but many of the peoples of the Middle Eastern area. Despite this, the common meaning is limited to Jews.

ANTI-ZIONIST: This is a form which has become increasingly significant. In theory, it suggests negative feelings directed only toward those who support or reside in Israel. In practice, it is a camouflage for general anti-Semitism.

Now that we have an overview of the types of anti-Semitism, we would like you to make an observation. Looking at yourself and your class, what types of anti-Semitic experiences would you say are most common? What do you think it means when some forms of anti-Semitism are more prevalent than others? Let us now direct our attention to one expression of anti-Semitism: The Holocaust.

PART TEN

ANTISEMITISM

Jewish Literacy - Rabbi Joseph Telushkin
William Morrow and Company, Inc. New York, 1991

“CHRIST-KILLER”

I debated long and hard about whether to include this term before deciding that leaving “Christ-killer” out of a book on Jewish literacy would make as little sense as leaving “nigger” out of a book on “black literacy.” Certainly, it would be a better world if there was no need to know such words, and in the messianic age (see *Messiah*)—which Judaism believes lies in the future—such words, I am sure, will be totally forgotten. Until then, a few sobering reflections on this ancient and murderous epithet.

“Christ-killer” has been among the last words tens of thousands of Jews have heard before being murdered. So then, why is it still used in the present day? Can one imagine a contemporary visitor to Greece yelling “Socrates-killer” at the local Athenians? Furthermore, even if some Jews in the first century helped bring about Rome’s execution of Jesus, the worst that might be said about Jews during the next nineteen centuries is that they are “descendants of Christ-killers.” However, that expression has never been used. “Christ-killer” apparently means that by continuing to reject the claim that Jesus is the son of God and the Messiah, Jews in every generation are killing him again. This explains why Jews who convert to Christianity, along with Italians (descendants of the Roman executioners of Jesus), never have this epithet hurled at them.

The greatest oddity about the term is that it was the Romans, not the Jews, who killed Jesus. Outside of the New Testament, one of the earliest references to Jesus occurs in the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus, who notes Jesus’ name and the fact of his crucifixion by the Roman authorities. Since Jesus’ execution is the *one* fact attested to outside of the New Testament, the historically significant question is “For what offenses did Rome crucify prisoners?” We know of two: for rebelling slaves and for those who committed abominable crimes, particularly political rebels. Jesus fell into the second category, a fact evidenced by the sign that was hung over his head during the crucifixion: KING OF THE JEWS. It would appear that Jesus was one of many first-century Jewish political rebels against the Roman conquerors. An estimated 50 to 100,000 anti-Roman activists were crucified during the Roman rule over Judea. As historian Hyam Maccoby has written, “The cross became as much a symbol of Roman oppression as nowadays the gas chamber is a

symbol of German Nazi oppression. . . . Associating the guilt of the cross with the Jews rather than the Romans is comparable to branding the Jewish victims . . . with the guilt of using gas chambers instead of suffering from them."

At Vatican II in 1962, the Catholic Church officially exonerated most of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries, and all subsequent Jews, of the charge of deicide (killing God). At that time, the Catholic writer Edward Keating suggested that instead of the antideicide resolution, "They should have come out with a very simple statement: We have been guilty of anti-semitism for two thousand years. Forgive us." To be fair to Pope John XXIII, who was the force behind the resolution, that sort of apology is precisely what he intended. Shortly before his death, the pontiff composed a prayer directed to Jesus, in which he asserted that Christian antisemitism constituted a second crucifixion of Christ (see the prayer cited in the entry on *Pope John XXIII*).

The belief that the Jews killed Jesus made the Jews seem not only hateful but also terrifying. After all, only a people with superhuman powers could "murder" God. One can only hope that the term continues to decline in usage, as it indeed has since the Holocaust. See also *Crusades*, *Blood Libel*, and the *Black Plague*.

SOURCE: One of the finest works of history on the subject of Jesus, his crucifixion, and the Jews, is Hyam Maccoby's *Revolution in Judaea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance*. The selection from Maccoby's book is on p. 36.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Although Jesus and all his apostles were Jews, most Jews and Christians think of them as Christians. Names like Andrew and Peter, long common among Christians, were until recently rarely used by Jews.

The one apostle people naturally think of as Jewish is Judas, whose very name connotes Judah and Judaism. The New Testament's portrayal of Judas as having betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver heightened considerably Christian enmity toward Jews, for not only does Judas betray Jesus, he does so in a particularly loathsome manner.

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He tells the Jewish priests who wish to arrest Jesus that they should follow him, and that the man whom he kisses will be Jesus (Matthew 26:47ff; Mark 14:43ff; and Luke 22:47-48). He literally betrays Jesus with a kiss. As theologian Richard Rubenstein has noted, the lesson Christians learned was that no matter how close you think you are to a Jew, at the very moment the Jew is kissing you, he may be betraying you.

All of this would be unfortunate enough were it based on a true episode. But as was indicated in the preceding entry on *Christ-killer* and in the entry on *Jesus*, there is little reason to think the Jews were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, and many reasons to think they were not. Furthermore, the detail about the kiss of betrayal appears to have been added specifically to make Judas and his Jewish allies seem even more hateful. Would it not have been sufficient for Judas to inform the High Priest of Jesus' hiding place? Why kiss him? According to Jesus' testimony, the men who arrested him knew who he was and had no need of Judas' kiss of identification. "When I was with you day after day in the Temple," Jesus reminds those who arrest him, "you did not lay hands on me" (Luke 22:53).

According to a widespread historical account (dismissed by some as legendary), the story of Judas had horrible repercussions in 1492 for Spain's 300,000 Jews. In March of that year, acting under the influence of the head of the Spanish Inquisition, Father Tomás de Torquemada, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ordered the expulsion of all Jews from Spain. The Jewish finance minister, Don Isaac *Abravanel, tried to bribe the "idealist" King Ferdinand to do what was morally right and offered him thirty thousand dinars to cancel the decree. He seemed to be making some headway until Torquemada, who was listening in an adjacent room, burst into the king's chamber, threw his cross down on the floor, and cried out, "Will you betray our Lord Jesus for thirty thousand dinars as Judas did for thirty pieces of silver?" The discussion was ended, and the fate of Spanish Jewry sealed at that moment (see *The Spanish Expulsion, 1492*).

BLOOD LIBEL, ALSO KNOWN AS RITUAL MURDER

Once the Christian world believed that Jesus was God and that the Jews had killed him (see *Christ-killer*), no crime seemed too bizarre or horrific to attribute to them. The blood libel, the accusation that Jews murder non-Jews in a religious ritual and then drink their blood, originated in twelfth-century England. Over the next seven hundred years, it led to the murder of tens of thousands of Jews.

The particular irony of the blood libel is that it was directed against the first nation in history to outlaw human sacrifice (see Genesis 22 and Deuteronomy 18:10), and the only people in the ancient Near East to prohibit the consumption of *any* blood (Leviticus 3:17; 7:26; 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 12:16; 12:23–25).

The first accusation was made in Norwich, England, in 1144, but since no victim was found, the case was dropped. Jews visiting Lincoln in 1255 to attend a wedding were not so fortunate. A day after the wedding, the body of a Christian boy named Hugh, who had been missing for three weeks, was found in a cesspool into which he had apparently fallen. The Christian townspeople believed otherwise. A contemporary chronicler, Matthew Paris, wrote: "The child was first fattened for ten days with white bread and milk, and then . . . almost all the Jews of England were invited to the crucifixion." Later, *under torture*, a Jew named Copin confessed "that the Jews had crucified the boy in the manner that the Jews had once crucified Jesus." Nineteen Jews were hanged without a trial.

Thereafter, the ritual murder accusation became unstoppable. A century later, in his *Canterbury Tales* Geoffrey Chaucer wrote of the Jews' supposed murder of Hugh in "The Prioress's Tale." *Six hundred years* after the fabricated incident, the English essayist Charles Lamb wrote: "I confess that I have not the nerve to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln." Hugh's death also inspired dozens of ballads. Once, while taking a car trip through the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, I purchased a book of Ozark Mountain folk songs, *printed in 1973*, which included a ballad inspired by the "murder" of Hugh. In this song, a Jewish woman invites a young Christian boy into her house, and then:

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She pinned a napkin o'er his face
 And pinned it with a gold pin
 Then called for a vessel of blood
 To catch his heart blood in
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By the fourteenth century, the ritual murder charge had become associated with *Passover; Jews were accused of mixing Christian blood into their *matzah and wine. The joyous holiday turned into a time of terror for Jews because of their fear that antisemites would frame them by murdering a Christian child and then dump his body in a Jewish house.

In 1840, Christian antisemites carried the blood libel into the Muslim world, and the hapless Jews of Damascus were charged with murdering a Capuchin monk (see *Damascus Blood Libel*). The "Damascus Affair" became a turning point in Jewish history; for the first time world Jewry, including communal leaders from England, France, Austria, Germany, and the United States, organized to protest antisemitism. Led by Sir Moses Montefiore, they succeeded in their efforts: Within months, the victims were released except for two who had died under torture.

The last major ritual murder trial was conducted in Kiev in 1913 under the impetus of the Czarist government. Remarkably, a peasant jury exonerated the accused, Mendel Beilis. The incident is the subject of Bernard Malamud's novel *The Fixer*.

During the 1930s, the Nazi newspaper *Der Stuermer* regularly carried illustrations of rabbis sucking the blood of German children. Although the blood libel happily is in decline today, as recently as the 1970s, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia declared repeatedly in newspaper interviews that the Jews annually celebrate Passover by murdering non-Jews and drinking their blood.

The fact that so many Christians believed and spread this lie for hundreds of years led the early Zionist thinker Ahad Ha'am to note one "consolation" in the blood libel: It enabled Jews to resist internalizing the world's negative portrayal of them. "Every Jew who has been brought up among Jews, knows as an indisputable fact that throughout the length and breadth of Jewry there is not a single individual who drinks human blood for religious purposes. . . . 'But,' you ask, 'is it possible that everybody can be wrong, and the Jews right?' Yes, it is possible: the blood accusation proves it possible."

SOURCES AND FURTHER READINGS: *Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism*, Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, pp. 98-101. The Charles Lamb quote is taken from his essay "Imperfect Sympathies," in *Essays of Elia*, and the Ahad Ha'am quote is from his *Selected Essays*, pp. 203-204. The best overall treatment of the blood libel is found in Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*, pp. 97-155. See also H. H. Ben-Sasson, *Trial and Achievement: Currents in Jewish History*, pp. 243-251.

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SHYLOCK

One of the ugliest characters created by William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is Shylock, a Jewish moneylender who insists that a non-Jew, Antonio, repay his overdue loan in a pound of flesh drawn from near his heart. The sadistic Shylock is ultimately thwarted by a legal trick, but the damage inflicted on the Jews by *The Merchant of Venice* has been far greater than a pound of flesh. The image of Jews as a nation of moneylending Shylocks has persisted throughout the Middle Ages into the modern world. To this day, the illegal industry of high-interest loans is known as “shylocking.”

More remarkably, the odious Shylock was created out of thin air. Shakespeare had never met or seen a Jew in his life, since the Jews had been expelled from England in 1290 (see *Expulsions of Jews from England, 1290*), more than 350 years before his birth, and not readmitted until 1656, forty years after his death. This play is certainly not the only instance of Jews being vilified in a society in which they no longer lived. A century after their expulsion, Chaucer depicted Jews as ritual murderers of young Christian children in *The Canterbury Tales* (see preceding entry). Even after the Jews were readmitted to England, their image did not undergo a permanent improvement. In the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens fashioned yet another stereotypical Jewish villain, Fagin, who made his living training young boys to become pickpockets.

As befits a great playwright, Shakespeare did give Shylock a redeeming moment. In a powerful excoriation of those who denied the Jews' humanity, Shylock cries out: “I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions. . . . If you prick us, do we not bleed?” Unfortunately, the point of this powerful rhetoric is to build up to Shylock's insistence on getting his pound of flesh: “And if you wrong us, shall we not avenge it?”

Many Jews and non-Jews alike believe erroneously that the involvement of medieval Jews in moneylending was a cause of antisemitism (see next entry). And, need it be added, there is no record of any Jewish moneylender ever asking for payment in flesh. That stunning literary device was left for Shakespeare to reveal to the world.

SOURCE AND FURTHER READING: Bernard Glassman, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes Without Jews: Images of the Jews in England, 1290–1700*.

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ANTISEMITISM

The Scapegoat Thesis

Few people know that the word "antisemitism" was created by an antisemite, Wilhelm Marr. Marr's intention was to replace the German word *Judenhass* (Jew-hatred) with a term that would make Jew-haters sound less vulgar and even somewhat scientific.

Unfortunately, the term Marr created is particularly misleading since it conveys the impression that antisemites oppose Semites. This misconception has enabled Jew-haters in the Arab world to deny that they are antisemites, on the eminently logical grounds that they themselves are Semites. But for Marr, and all subsequent enemies of the Jews, antisemitism has always been a code word used exclusively against Jews. The greatest antisemite of all, Adolf Hitler, had no compunctions about welcoming (Semitic) Arab leaders, including the Mufti of Jerusalem, to Berlin during World War II. For this reason, many writers today have adopted the practice initiated by several Jewish and Christian scholars, and write antisemite as one word; spelling it "anti-Semite" in the conventional manner, only fosters the false impression that there is a wider ethnic entity against which "anti-Semitism" is leveled.

Throughout history, antisemitism has been directed against Judaism and its values. For that reason, Jews have long spoken of those who have been killed by antisemites as having died *al *kiddush ha-Shem*—to sanctify God's name. Until about 1800, the societies in which Jews lived were generally piously Christian or Muslim, and so antisemitism focused on Jewish concepts of God and law. In the last two centuries, during which nationalism became a dominant value in the Western and Arab worlds, antisemitism increasingly focused on the Jews' peoplehood and nationhood. In fact, many Jew-haters today even deny that they are antisemites, claiming only that they are anti-Zionists.

Since antisemitism has traditionally been directed against Judaism and its values, Jews who have been willing to disavow those values and convert to the majority religion have usually been able to evade antisemitism. Of course, this was not the case under the Nazis, since *Hitler believed that even Jews who abandoned Judaism carried Jewish ideas with them.

During the past century, as more and more Jews have become irreligious, it has no longer seemed logical to many academics, and lay people as well, that antisemitism had anything to do with Judaism or its values. Rather, they claim that antisemitism is caused by socioeconomic or cultural factors. For example, one theory is that Jews were hated in the medieval period because they were moneylenders. While it is true that a disproportionate number of medieval moneylenders were Jews, to assume that it is for that reason that Jews were hated, one must also assume that before becoming moneylenders Jews were active, well-integrated members of European society. Only on that momentous day when they collectively became moneylenders did antisemitism erupt. In actuality, Jews were first hated. Because they were hated, they were forbidden to practice other professions and forced to become moneylenders. Once they became moneylenders, it *exacerbated* an already existent antisemitism, but it did not cause it.

As regards economic explanations of modern antisemitism, which attribute the hatred of Jews to their wealth: Jews have never been as affluent as they are today in contemporary America—and never before have they encountered so little antisemitism. In fact, almost all American Jews whose families came from Eastern Europe have had grandparents and great-grandparents who were far poorer and suffered much more antisemitism.

Another popular explanation for antisemitism is the “scapegoat thesis”: Jews are blamed for a society’s ills by those who wish to mobilize the masses around a common hatred. Many people believe, for example, that Hitler blamed the Jews in order to win elections in Germany. The reality is that Hitler didn’t blame the Jews to gain power; he gained power, in large measure, in order to act against the Jews. Hitler was sufficiently astute not to give full vent to his antisemitic passions during the German election campaigns—everybody knew he was an antisemite anyway—realizing that it needlessly alienated respectable middle-class voters.

The scapegoat thesis, in any case, does not explain why *Jews* are hated. What is it about this small group of people that can unite the far left and far right, rich and poor, religious and antireligious in opposition to them? Some fifty years ago, the Jewish writer Maurice Samuel pinpointed the fallacy of the scapegoat thesis in his book *The Great Hatred*: “To say that a man has hallucinations when he is hungry makes sense; to say that he has hallucinations only about Jews when he is hungry does not.”

It is one of history’s intriguing ironies that when Wilhelm Marr created the term “antisemitism” in 1879, he intended to be known among all future antisemites as the leader of a powerful movement of Jew-haters. Today, however, his name is known only to Jewish scholars.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READINGS: Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism*; Maurice Samuel, *The Great Hatred*; Malcolm

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Hay, *Europe and the Jews*; Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*; Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism 1700–1933*; Jacques Maritain, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*; Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism* (four volumes).

242

THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION

The most famous antisemitic document in history, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is a forgery. First circulated by Russian secret police during the late 1800s, it purports to reveal the minutes of a secret meeting of world Jewish leaders who are conspiring to take over the world.

The *Protocols*' original distributors claimed that it demonstrated that many heads of state were under the domination of three hundred Jewish leaders who were responsible for Europe's major problems. *The Protocols*, of course, proved nothing of the kind. They were forgeries distributed by the czar's secret police.

Thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, of Jews have died because of this infamous forgery. In Russia itself, the *Protocols* were used to provoke hundreds of pogroms during the Russian civil war of 1918–1920, when the Jews were accused of having brought communism to Russia.

Unfortunately, the *Protocols* spread far beyond Russia. In the United States, their most prominent proponent was Henry Ford, one of the most admired men in the country. In addition to his automobile company, Ford owned a weekly newspaper, *The Dearborn* [Michigan] *Independent*, which he distributed through Ford car dealerships. For more than a year and a half during the early 1920s, each issue of the paper carried reports on the worldwide Jewish conspiracy under the title *The International Jew*. In Germany Hitler had these articles translated and widely disseminated. For several years, American Jews were stymied; they did not know how to react to Ford's calumnies. No legal mechanism was available to stop the libels, since American libel laws protect individuals but not groups from slander. (For example, were someone to charge Jews with killing non-Jews and drinking their blood [see *Blood Libel*] the Jewish community could not sue the libel's perpetrator. Only if the "libeler" mentioned individual Jews as having performed the act would those people be able to sue.) When *The Dearborn Independent* started accusing individual Jewish businessmen of eco-

conomic conspiracies and dishonesty, some of them fought back. The leading Jewish lawyer in the United States, Louis Marshall—so prominent in American-Jewish life in the 1920s that American Jews were said to live under “Marshall Law”—sued on their behalf. Ford and his paper were convicted of libel, and the automobile magnate issued a statement repudiating *The International Jew* and requesting that all copies of it be withdrawn from distribution. This helped stop the *Protocols*' distribution in the United States, but Ford's *International Jew*, a reworking of the document, continued to lead a healthy life elsewhere.

Hitler continued to distribute the document in Germany. He apparently regarded Ford as an ally. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that “Hitler kept for many years a photograph of Ford on his desk. When he heard [in 1923] that Ford might run for president, he said: ‘I wish that I could send some of my shock troops to Chicago and other big cities in America to help in the elections. . . . We look to Heinrich Ford as the leader of the growing Fascist movement in America. . . . We have just had his anti-Jewish articles translated and published. The book is being circulated in millions throughout Germany.’”

One might have thought that the Holocaust would have convinced antisemites that world Jewry had very limited power; Jews could not, after all, stop the murder of one third of their people. After World War II, however, prominent leaders in the Arab world became the new disseminators of the *Protocols*. In an interview in the Indian magazine *Blitz*, in October 1958, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser commended the *Protocols* to its editor: “I wonder if you have read a book called *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. I will give you an English copy. It proves clearly, to quote from the *Protocols*, that ‘three hundred Zionists, each of whom knows all the others, govern the fate of the European continents and they elect their successors from their entourage.’” The late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia used to give copies of the *Protocols*, and an anthology of other antisemitic writings, to guests of his regime. A group of journalists who accompanied French Foreign Minister Michel Joubert on a visit to Saudi Arabia in January 1974 were told by Saudi officials that “these were the king's favorite books.”

Norman Cohn aptly entitled his definitive work on the *Protocols*, *Warrant for Genocide*. To the Nazis and their allies, the *Protocols* proved how deadly dangerous the Jews were and why they must all be murdered.

In the twentieth century, a charge every bit as false as the medieval blood libel or the accusation that the Jews caused the Black Plague by poisoning the wells of Europe, has been believed by perhaps hundreds of millions of people.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READINGS: Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*; Hitler's statement about Henry “Heinrich” Ford is found on p. 162. The episodes concerning Nasser's and Faisal's espousals of the *Protocols* are cited in Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism*, p. 125.

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NATIONAL SOCIALIST WHITE PEOPLE'S PARTY

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Arlington, Virginia

BUY ARYAN

PATRONIZE ONLY
WHITE
MERCHANTS!

How Many Stores
in your Area are
JEW owned?



IN RECENT YEARS THE MAIN STREET OF EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE U.S. HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY JEWS, WHO HAVE DRIVEN WHITE PEOPLE - LIKE YOU! - INTO BANKRUPTCY. UNLESS IMMEDIATE ACTION IS TAKEN, WHITE MERCHANTS WILL BE DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE ALTOGETHER!



**BOYCOTT
JEW STORES**

IT'S TIME FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO TAKE A UNITED STAND IN THEIR OWN INTEREST...

DO THE JEWS REALLY DOMINATE AMERICAN BUSINESS?

YOU BET THEY DO. ARYANS (WHITES) HAVE BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF MANY LINES OF BUSINESS ENTIRELY!

JEWS HAVE ALREADY BOUGHT UP THE MAIN BUSINESS SECTIONS OF THE LARGE CITIES. NOW THEY'RE MOVING INTO THE SMALLER TOWNS.

JEWS OWN MOST OF OUR THEATRES, CLOTHING, JEWELRY, AND DEPARTMENT STORES. THEY WORK TOGETHER TO SQUEEZE OUT ARYAN BUSINESSMEN.

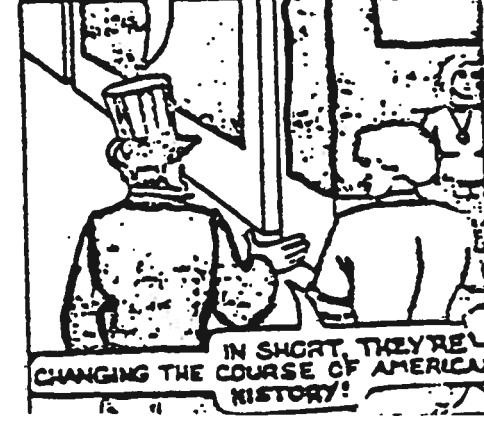




BECAUSE JEWS HAVE GAINED CONTROL OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC LIFE, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRING ABOUT LARGE SCALE RACE-MIXING, FOSTER DEGENERACY IN ART, LITERATURE, AND MOVIES...

SOME-THING SHOULD BE DONE - BUT WHAT? SOME-THING CAN BE DONE

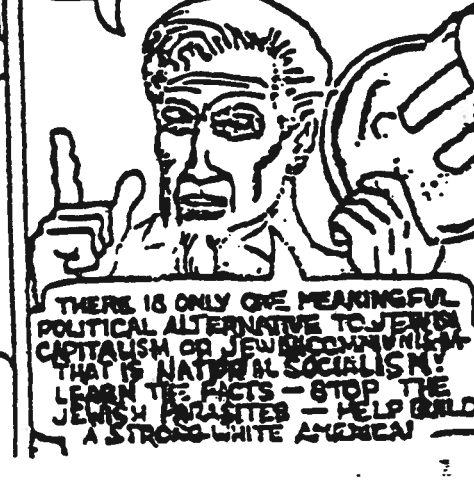
WHITE PEOPLE MUST LISTEN SO THAT THEIR CHILDREN CAN HAVE A DECENT FUTURE FREE FROM ECONOMIC PARASITES!



IN SHORT, THEY'RE CHANGING THE COURSE OF AMERICAN HISTORY!



FIND OUT WHICH STORES IN YOUR AREA ARE JEW OWNED - THEN BOYCOTT THEM! BUY ONLY FROM ARYAN MERCHANTS. FINALLY...



THERE IS ONLY ONE MEANINGFUL POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO JEWISH CAPITALISM OR JEWISH COMMUNISM - THAT IS NATIONAL SOCIALISM! LEARN THE FACTS - STOP THE JEWISH PARASITES - HELP BUILD A STRONG WHITE AMERICAN



**WHITE
POWER!**

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**DEATH TO
RACE-
MIXERS!**

NEW ORDER PUBLICATIONS
Box 6414, Lincoln, NE 68508



**NIGGERS
BEWARE!**

*HATE IT WHITE!
...OR DIE!*



NEW ORDER PUBLICATIONS
Box 6414, Lincoln, NE 68508

Red and black stickers such as these were found plastered on campus Sunday by University police. Police suspect an out-of-town group to be responsible for the vandalism.

**Nazi stickers
found posted
on 6 bldgs.
on campus**

University Police Services reported finding racially intimidating stickers on lampposts and buildings around campus yesterday morning.

University police officer Donald Reed said a total of 45 stickers were found posted from Willard Building to the Forum Building.

"We found stickers posted on handrails in front of Burrows Building, on lampposts and sidewalk posts on the Mall, on Patten, Kern Building, Carpenter Building, the Visual Arts Building (information) kiosk, and the Music Building," Reed said.

University police found four different kinds of the red-and-black stickers. The stickers brandish a swastika and slogans such as "White Power," "Death to Race Mixers," "Niggers Beware" and "Stop Immigration."

The stickers also include the address of a Neo-Nazi group located in Lincoln, Neb.

Reed said, although no group or individual has yet been identified as responsible, police suspect it is an out-of-town group.

Police will contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department about the incident this week.

- by Hans Kroger

The Daily Collegian Monday, Oct. 23, 1967

PENN STATE STICKER BLITZ

I was at Penn State recently and saw some of your literature around campus. Please send information. I'm a student at Gavron University.
- Erie, PA

On the weekend several stickers bearing your address were placed on lampposts, walls, and outdoor facilities all over the Penn State campus at University Park. These stickers, featuring swastikas and slogans like "Death to Race-Mixers" and "Niggers Beware", were discovered by University police. The incident was reported by the Penn State newspaper.
- University Park, PA

I am extremely interested in your organization and would appreciate any information. I learned about your organization through some publicity posters in my area.
- State College, PA

I saw one of your stickers and want some information.
- Ashton, PA

I stumbled across a small flyer labeled "Inflation is Jewish" and am interested in your organization.
- Columbus, GA

I got your address off of some stickers, and I would like for you to send me some literature.
- Oklahoma City, OK

STICKERS DRAW INQUIRIES

I have seen many of your stickers posted around the city and I am very pleased. This work may only be a small dent in the Jew's race-mixing mill, but every word, publication, protest, action and even stickers are greatly appreciated.
- Rochester Hills, Michigan

I recently saw one of your stickers and it drew my interest. Send more information.
- Chester, NY

TIP

Use Elmer's glue on the back of stickers to keep them up longer. Once the glue dries, they're almost impossible to remove. This is especially effective if you put them up at night, because they have time to dry. Also, by using glue, you can stick them onto wooden phone poles, whereas by just tacking them they won't stick.
- South Meriden, CT

STICKERS PUT TO GOOD USE

Your stickers have been put to good use. About 10 of my little brother's friends (high school students) put up bunches of them in their respect areas, thus helping my effort to spread the word.

BUY GENTILE

BOYCOTT ONLY CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS

IN RECENT YEARS THE MAIN STREET OF VIRTUALLY EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE U.S. HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY Hordes of EASTERN-EUROPEAN JEWS, WHO ARE SLOWLY BUT SURELY DRIVING GENTILE BUSINESS MEN AND BANKERS OUT—UNLESS IMMEDIATE ACTION IS TAKEN—CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS WILL BE DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE ALTOGETHER.

DO THE JEWS REALLY DESERVE...
 YOU SAY THEY DO...
 GENTILE MERCHANTS...
 WE ARE NOT PART OF OUR...
 SOMETHING ELSE IS...
 WE ARE NOT PART OF OUR...
 SOMETHING ELSE IS...

BOYCOTT JEW STORES

THE DIARY OF REBECCA ICEBERG - REVIEWED FOR THE "JEWS OF THE WORLD" BY GERRY FABLE.



The Only Good Jew is a Clean Jew

WE ARE BACK!

100

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RECORDED MESSAGE
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Orange Co. (714)879-2264
San Fran. (415)626-4458
Sacramento (916)927-4656
San Jose (408)993-0740



WHITE STUDENTS!

THE HOLOCAUST IS A HOAX!
READ THE REVERSE SIDE!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU ASKED
YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS?

- What ever happened to "White workers' rights"?
- I wonder how long my job will last with unconstitutional Affirmative Action Programs as they are?
- Why does my school have Black Studies, Mexican Studies, Asian Studies, etc. but no White Studies classes or clubs?
- Why do politicians bow and scrape to minority political pressure groups, but never address themselves to the problem of White workers?

100

P O BOX 65 • PALMBOCK CALIFORNIA 92028 • U.S.A.

What proof exists that the Nazis preferred genetics or folk-lore? What did the million Jews?

The only evidence is the testimony of individual "Survivors." That testimony is contradictory, and no "survivor" claims to have actually witnessed any gassing. There is no hard evidence whatsoever: no mounds of ash, no crematorium capable of doing the job, no piles of clothes, no human hair, no lung shovels made of human hair, no records, no diaries, no books, no letters.

What proof exists that the million Jews were not led by the Nazis? Extensive evidence, including that of a forensic, demographic, analytical and comparative career, quite proving the impossibility of such a feat: an exaggeration of, perhaps 100,000.

About how many Jews died in the concentration camps?

About 100,000.

How did they die? Not only from recurring typhus epidemics that ravaged war-torn Europe during the period. Also from starvation and lack of medical attention toward the end of the war, when virtually all road and rail transportation had been annihilated by the Allies.

What is the difference of the million or 200,000 Jews killed during the war, and the 3,000,000 "Holocaust" "prisoners"—there was no deliberate attempt to exterminate anyone.

Auschwitz was in Poland, not Germany. Is there any proof that gas chambers for the purpose of killing human beings existed at or in Auschwitz? No. A reward of \$50,000 was offered for such proof, the money being held in trust by a bank, but no one came up with any credible evidence. Auschwitz, captured by the Soviets, was extensively modified after the war and modern gas chambers were reconstructed to look like large "gas chambers." It is now a big tourist attraction for the communist Polish government.

What about the claim that those who questioned the "Holocaust" were anti-Semitic or neo-Nazi? This is a gross attempt to draw attention away from facts and honest arguments. Scholars who refute "Holocaust" claims are of all persuasions—Democrat, Republican, liberal, radical, socialist, Christian, Jew, etc. There is no correlation between "Holocaust" refutation and neo-Semitism or neo-Nazism. As a matter of fact, there are increasing numbers of Jewish scholars who openly admit that the "Holocaust" is severely factually false.

How does the "Holocaust" story benefit the Jews today? It removes them from any criticism as a group. It provides a "common bond" with which their leaders can control them. It is instrumental in money-raising campaigns and to itself, and to Israel, totaling about \$10 billion per year.

How does it benefit the State of Israel? It funnels the billions of dollars in "reparations" the State of Israel has received from West Germany (East Germany refused to pay). It is used by the Zionist/Israeli lobby to control American foreign policy toward Israel and to force American taxpayers to put up all the money Israel wants. And the annual rate is growing each year.

BIG REWARD OFFERED

I need a 100% FOOLPROOF method to determine any non-Aryan who is part non-Aryan, but who passes in society for pure White and does such evil against pure Whites including infiltrating Aryan groups and mongrelizing pure Whites. Contact me, you smart Aryan inventors and true scientists at:

James R.
P.O. Box 553
Van Nuys, CA 91408
PAID ADVERTISEMENT

RACE-MIXING STINKS...

. . . but not half as bad as the pornographic Jews who promote it!

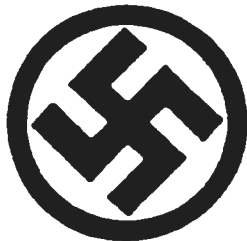
The sick, depraved Jews who monopolize the motion-picture industry can hardly wait to turn America into a mongrel cesspool. They are busy grinding out one obscene movie after another with race-mixing as the principal theme.

Gloating over their success in having all bans on obscenity and pornography lifted, the big Jewish film magnates no longer have to hide behind lame excuses of "artistic realism" to feed their undisguised filth to the public.

All over America countless Jewish-owned theaters are showing movies depicting lewd relationships between Blacks and Whites.

Wouldn't you like to do something about it?

If you've had enough filth and degeneracy, if you're tired of seeing a bunch of rich Jews fatten their bankrolls on the proceeds of the legalized pornography racket, and if you're fed up seeing your own race consistently downgraded, then contact us. We're going to do something about it!

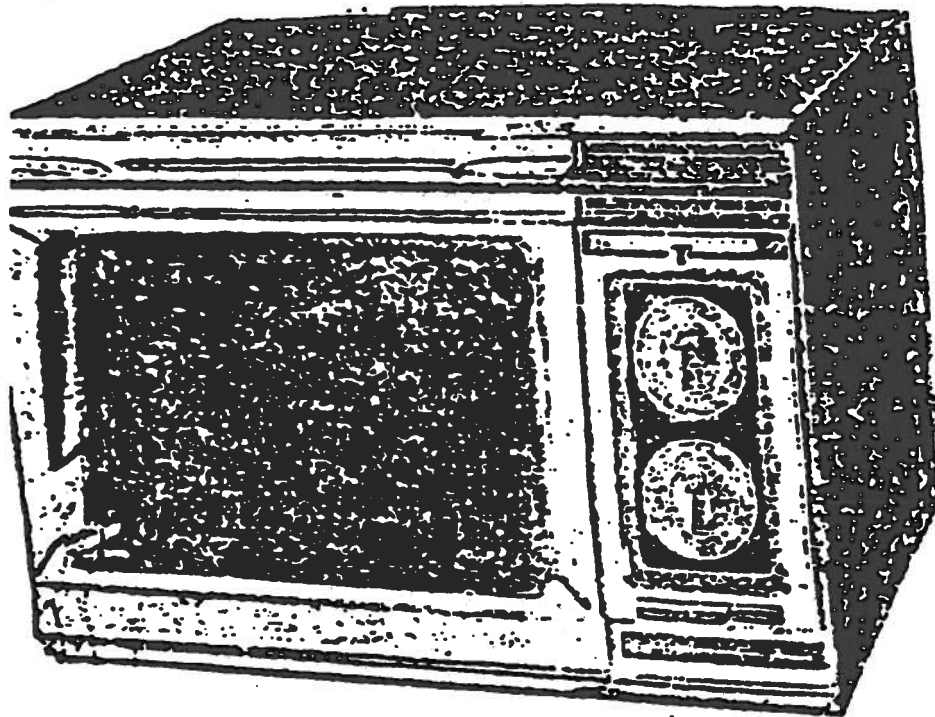


National Socialist White People's Party

2507 North Franklin Road—Arlington, Virginia 22201

Extra copies of this leaflet: \$2 for 50 or \$10 for 300. Write NS Publications, Box 50360, Clarendon, Illinois 60650.

Jew Dwarfs!



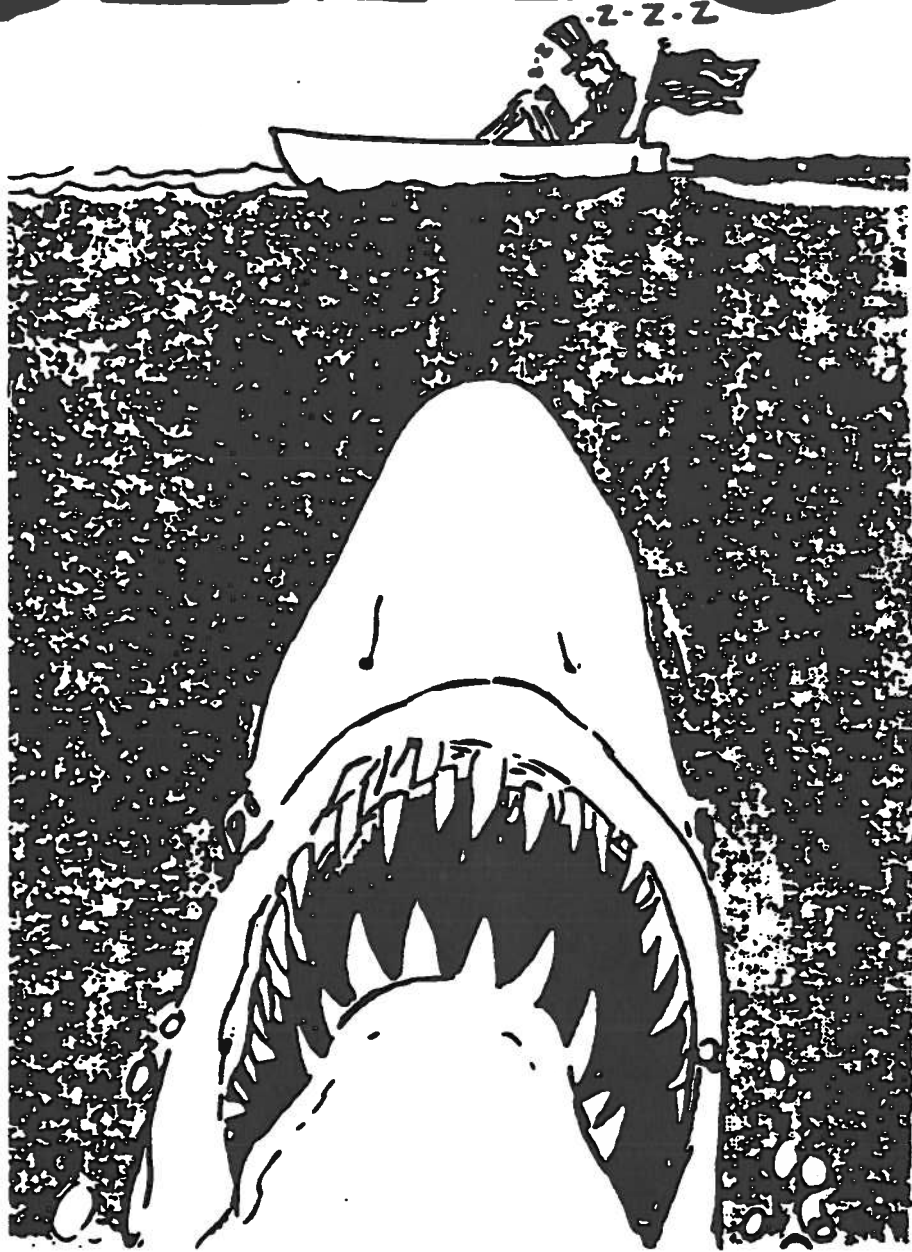
There is an oven in YOUR future!

National Socialist Movement

Box 10226

Detroit Michigan 48210

JEWES



Attention, Californians!

PLEASE BE PATIENT

AND WAIT FOR YOUR TURN AT THE PUMP.

THERE IS A SLIGHT SHORTAGE

OF GASOLINE, DUE TO CONTINUING SHIPMENTS OF U.S. PETROLEUM TO OUR ISRAELI "ALLIES," BUT THERE SHOULD STILL BE ENOUGH LEFT FOR NEARLY EVERYONE IN THIS COUNTRY.

REMEMBER,

AMERICA'S OBLIGATIONS TO ISRAEL MUST COME FIRST, SO JUST TIGHTEN YOUR BELT A BIT AND

BE PATIENT!



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National Chairman



DR. EDWARD E. FIELD
Secretary

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The National States Rights Party is by far the largest White Racist Political party in America. Both Democrats and Republican Parties have betrayed the White majority and place the interests of the minorities first. The NSRP is the last hope of the Whitesman to preserve our White Race and White civilization.

The NSRP is organized nationwide and is vigorously defending the Rights, Traditions, Heritage and Culture of the White people of America. Join the National States Rights Party and have the personal satisfaction of knowing that you are a part of a dynamic movement dedicated to saving our Race and Nation.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I am a loyal White Christian American, and wish to do my part to save the White Race from being destroyed through racial integration by becoming a member of the NSRP. Please send my membership card. I will be proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with my brothers and sisters in the ranks of the NSRP and dedicate myself to the salvation of our Race, Nation, and Faith.

"The Thunderbolt" included with membership.

Enclosed please find my annual dues of \$10.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Date of Birth Complexion

Any married person may also have a FREE membership for their mate. They must sign their own name below.

Please /

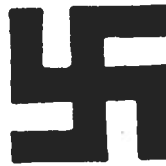
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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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All members receive the monthly Thunderbolt



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"... and there are 5,999,999 others like me in Jew York!"

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help us expose
**THE BIGGEST
JEWISH LIE!**

PLEASE
help us spread
THE TRUTH!

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**THE HOAX OF THE
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words to the German people were: "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry."¹¹

The question continues to oppress us: how could a man with this poor baggage of deranged ideas and prejudices become Chancellor of Germany? How was it possible that a state whose people and culture ranked high in the world's civilization should have entrusted its fate to this deluded man who believed that he had been chosen to lead a holy war against the Jews?

Many answers have been given and perhaps many are needed, for no single theory can satisfactorily explain Hitler's phenomenal success with the German people. They were mesmerized by his voice, and they responded to his message. Was it because their moral sense, at least with regard to the Jews, had become atrophied under the effect of generations of virulent anti-Semitism? Had the German people already become mithridatized by anti-Semitic poison, so that they had become immune even to Hitler's deadly brand? Was it because he spoke for them?

¹¹ Historians interested in Hitler's psychobiography put another question: what made Hitler an anti-Semite? Their search to establish the motivation for Hitler's anti-Semitism (which they look for in his personal life and psychology) may have a clinical interest for the psychoanalyst and titillate the general reader, but it seems to me irrelevant, bypassing more important historical and political questions. Thousands of Hitler's contemporaries in Central Europe were being shaped and developed as anti-Semites. Their psychological motivations are of relatively little interest to the historian, for they did not affect the course of history. Hitler's motivations—e.g., his putative Jewish origin—was not nearly as significant as his ideology and his program, that is, his beliefs and intentions.

2

Anti-Semitism in Modern Germany

A line of anti-Semitic descent from Martin Luther to Adolf Hitler is easy to draw. Both Luther and Hitler were obsessed by a demonologized universe inhabited by Jews. "Know, Christian," wrote Luther, "that next to the devil thou hast no enemy more cruel, more venomous and violent than a true Jew." Hitler himself, in that early dialogue with Dietrich Eckart, asserted that the later Luther—that is, the violently anti-Semitic Luther—was the genuine Luther. Luther's protective authority was invoked by the Nazis when they came to power, and his anti-Semitic writings enjoyed a revival of popularity. To be sure, the similarities of Luther's anti-Jewish exhortations with modern racial anti-Semitism and even with Hitler's racial policies are not merely coincidental. They all derive from a common historic tradition of Jew-hatred, whose provenance can be traced back to Haman's advice to Ahasuerus. But modern German anti-Semitism had more recent roots than Luther and grew out of a different soil—not that German anti-Semitism was new; it drew part of its sustenance from Christian anti-Semitism, whose foundation had been laid by the Catholic Church and upon which Luther built. It was equally a product of German nationalism. Modern German anti-Semitism was the bastard child of the union of Christian anti-Semitism with German nationalism.

German nationalism arose out of the ashes of German defeat in the Napoleonic wars. Fragmented, without nationhood, without political definition, lacking military power and economic vitality, the Germans searched for a shared identity that would restore the self-esteem that the defeats by the French had shattered. Since the real world, in its materiality, its politics, economics, and the force of arms, could give them no solace, they turned inward for self-definition, in search of psychic and metaphysical values, qualities of feeling and spirit. And they turned backward—to a remote past of glory and mastery, to a past deep in the womb of historic time, where they had once been secure.

This German backward-lookingness had emerged even before the Napoleonic wars, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as a reaction against the Enlightenment, especially its French and English protagonists. The Enlightenment represented the break with the medieval world and its concepts of man's innate sinfulness, whose only hope of salvation was through divine providence. For this world view the Enlightenment substituted the idea of progress, of man's perfectibility through the attainment of knowledge, and the theory that the universe was governed by reason. This idea of progress was to catch hold particularly among the French and the English, not only among the philosophers and sociologists, but in political circles as well.

In Germany these ideas spread too, but they were soon aborted by Germany's dominant conservative forces. The Holy Roman Empire, a paralytic, sclerotic, thousand-year survival, managed to exist, propped up by the strength of tradition and the inertia of apathy.¹ The Germans preferred to retain their loyalties to the past and resisted accommodation of their customs and folkways to the enormous changes of modernity. Instead they romanticized the values and ideals of their remote past. This commitment to the past explains the German preference for *Kultur* over *Zivilisation*. Culture was for them something innate, intrinsic, inherited, a tradition handed down from the past. Civilization was external, an artificial product of modernity, lacking the essence of a specific people, race, or culture.

Progress and enlightenment were associated not only with the French and English, but also with Jews. Invoking the universality of these concepts, Jews asked for emancipation, political equality. All France was astir over the pros and cons. The Alsatian Jews asked Moses Mendelssohn, then Europe's most eminent Jew, to help them. Believing that a plea for Jewish emancipation would have a better reception if presented by a Christian, Mendelssohn asked his friend Christian Wilhelm von Dohm (1751-1820), historian, political writer, and Prussian diplomat, to undertake the task. Dohm decided to extend his plea also on behalf of the

German Jews. His work *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (*On the Civic Betterment of the Jews*), Berlin, 1781, presented the case for granting Jews political equality. Its basic argument was the extraordinary notion that "the Jew is a human being even before he is a Jew." But the idea was too radical for the Germans.

Most participants in the ensuing public discussion disagreed with Dohm's belief that the Jews would become better citizens if the conditions under which they lived were improved. Adducing traditional medieval objections and citing Scripture or the Devil as evidence, some maintained that the Jews were unfit for emancipation and that there was no reason to think that things would change in the future. Others presented the argument of "Asiatic temperament": certain basic racial qualities inhered in Jews that were at variance with those of Germans. This fundamental difference between German and Jew was cited also, to the astonishment of Moses Mendelssohn, by Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791), an aged, prestigious scholar of biblical ("Old Testament") and Mosaic law at the University of Göttingen. Mendelssohn replied to Michaelis and other opponents of Jewish emancipation in classical terms: "Instead of using the expression 'Christians and Jews,' Herr Michaelis is continually served by 'Germans and Jews.' He refuses to recognize that the difference is in religion only and prefers to have us regarded as foreigners who must accept the conditions laid down to them by the owners of the land." Being himself a man of progress and enlightenment, he could not then, in 1783, foretell that the Germans could and would indeed choose another road.

The German response to the Enlightenment was an intimation of the future. From 1789 to 1815, the quarter-century between the French Revolution and the Congress of Vienna, the ethos of modern Germany took shape. The doctrines of the revolution were anathema to the princely, priestly, and knightly rulers of the German states and principalities. But the ideas had begun to infiltrate Germany, and within a few short years, as Napoleon's military success spread French influence across the face of Europe, French political domination of the German lands converted those ideas into political realities. German discomfiture with the new ideas of emancipation and equality turned into a deadly rancor both for the French and for the ideas and policies they had unleashed in Europe.

Wherever the French occupied German lands, Jews were the beneficiaries of the Rights of Man, winning emancipation in most of southern and western Germany. In some places under French command, the obligatory extension of equality to Jews enraged the Germans even more

than French domination. Nevertheless, the trend toward emancipation reached even into the stronghold of Prussia. In 1812, as part of a sweeping program of legislative and economic reform, Minister Karl August von Hardenberg, himself under the influence of the ideas of 1789, persuaded the reluctant Frederick William III to grant the Jews citizenship and political rights.

Napoleon destroyed the Holy Roman Empire, that is, the shadow of it that had persisted. After Jena, in 1806, he reorganized the German lands, secularizing the ecclesiastical states and incorporating most of the free cities into territorial states. He hastened the demise of the medieval order of Free Imperial Knights, reorganized the six hundred myriad political units in a manageable number of middle-sized states, and formed a confederation of German states under French protection. (Ironically, that confederation would later provide a basis for German unification.) The formal bonds of historic empire that had linked the Germans to their Teutonic past had been destroyed. To compensate for the loss, for the humiliations at the hands of the French, for the fragmentation, the Germans began to forge a new nationalism that transcended the boundaries of the German states and the realities of their contemporary political life. That quarter-century, inaugurated by the French Revolution and closed by the Congress of Vienna, was the formative period in shaping German national character. From it emerged a national ethos that was to animate German cultural, social, and political life for well over a century.

To begin with, at the simplest and most obvious level, the Germans defined themselves in contrast to the French. What was French was un-German. Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860), poet and pamphleteer, wrote of the war winter of 1812 that the German fatherland was located "where every Frenchman is called foe, and every German is called friend."² The great liberal ideas of the time—liberty, equality, fraternity—were French ideas, and Germans of that generation denounced liberal ideas as un-German. That outlook proved to be a durable one.

The philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808), admonished Germans to "have character and be German" ("*Charakter haben und Deutsch sein*"). His Gallophobia was equal to that of his contemporaries, but he excelled in his exaltation of Germanness. At a time when the Germans had been abjectly defeated, he consoled them with a messianic future: "... Among all modern peoples it is you in whom the seed of human perfection most decidedly lies, and you who are charged with progress in human development. If you perish in this your essential nature, then there perishes

together with you every hope of the whole human race for salvation from the depths of its miseries."³

Called the father of German nationalism, Fichte has also been called the father of ~~modern-German~~ anti-Semitism. His celebration of German nationalism was matched by his denigration of Jews. In 1793 he had argued against Jewish emancipation, characterizing the Jews as a state within a state that would undermine the German nation. Jewish ideas were as obnoxious as French ideas. The only way in which he could concede giving rights to Jews, he said, would be "to cut off all their heads in one night, and to set new ones on their shoulders, which should contain not a single Jewish idea."

Similarly, Arndt, who had defined German specificity by distinguishing the Germans from their external enemy, the French, refined that uniqueness by further distinguishing the Germans from an internal enemy—the Jews. The Jews, beneficiaries of political emancipation that the French had thrust upon the unprepared and unwilling Germans, became identified in the German mind with the ideas and values of revolutionary France. They were not seen as true insiders. In Christian feudal Germany, the Jews had been outsiders, and in the newly emergent idea of an ethnic, national Germany, the Jews continued to be outsiders.

Arndt and his disciple, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), are credited with developing that particular concept of German nationalism associated with the word "Volk." It is a word that has come to mean more than simply "a people," more than the usual idea of a people united by common traditions and cultural heritage, language, territory, values and morality. "Volk," according to George Mosse, signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental "essence," never specified, some times called "nature," "cosmos," "mythos." This essence, Mosse says, "was fused to man's innermost nature, and represented the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the Volk."⁴

Jahn, a fiery German patriot who fought in the wars of liberation against Napoleon, in his book *Deutsches Volkstum* (*German Volkdom*) published in 1810, elaborated on the concept of Volk: "A state without Volk is nothing, a soulless artifice; a Volk without a state is nothing, a bodiless airy phantom, like the Gypsies and the Jews. Only state and Volk together can form a Reich, and such a Reich cannot be preserved without Volkdom."⁵ (Is it mere coincidence that the two wanderer peoples, Gypsies and Jews, against whom Jahn contrasted the "rooted Germans, were precisely the two ethnic groups that Hitler consigned to the gas chambers?) In this work Jahn used the word *Volksthümlichkeit*

(literally, "quality of Volkdom") to express his glorification of the simple people, the little folk, and the qualities associated with them—simplicity, naturalness, homespunness unspoiled by education and civilization.

According to Jahn, the Volk needed a state to house its soul and provide the means for its preservation. The German state was to serve some "larger" purpose—the preservation of the Volk and vehicle through which it could exercise its will. It was a Volkist idea that was to persist in Germany down to Hitler, who incorporated it into his ideology. The state was conceived as a kind of metahistorical entity that was identical with national spirit.

The "Christian" state had once been meant to serve "Christian" purposes, that is, the expansion of Christianity. The Volkist state appropriated that purpose. The Jew, by definition an outsider in the "Christian" state, remained an outsider in the Volkist conception of the state. Indeed, the idea of a "Christian" country of which Jews were outsiders served as a transition to the idea of the Volkist state. Thus Christian Friedrich Rühls (1781-1820), who held the chair for history at the University of Berlin, denied the claims of the Jews to the rights of German citizenship, because "a foreign people cannot obtain the rights which Germans enjoy partly through being Christians. . . . Everything should be done to induce [the Jews] . . . to accept Christianity and through it to be led to a true acquisition of German ethnic characteristics and thus to effect the destruction of the Jewish people."⁸

Because Jews were loyal to their own "state within the state," Rühls said they could not be loyal to the Christian state. They could, therefore, be only its subjects, but not its citizens. (That distinction was to be made by Hitler—at first, with regard to the Jews, but later, when in his scheme of things they were not even entitled to the status of subjects, it was a distinction made between the Czechs in the Protectorate, who were subjects, in contrast to the Sudeten Germans, who were citizens.) The Jews, Rühls believed, as a tolerated alien group, should be excluded from holding public office, from the army, and from the guilds and corporations, that is, from institutions representing the economic as well as public and national life of the country. To identify this alien and hostile group within the German midst, Rühls proposed reviving the medieval yellow patch.

Emancipation was the consequence of revolution and of the political realization that all men, even Jews, were equal, but the concept of Volk was the consequence of counterrevolution and of a belief in superiority and inferiority among peoples, of difference and inequality. Out of the defeat inflicted upon them by the French, the Germans devised a notion

of national, Volkist superiority to redeem their self-image. That self-image could not have been drawn without the Jew as antagonist.

The glorification of the natural man, the simple life, uncontaminated by the artificialities of civilization and the fetters of organized society, was a Romantic Rousseauist idea. The romanticization of the peasant as the natural man turned him into a receptacle of certain mystic qualities in his relationship to the land. The Volkist conception turned these universal qualities into specifically German ones. The peasant, by virtue of his descent from Germanic-Teutonic stock and by virtue of the mysterious qualities of Germanness in the very soil he worked, became the embodiment not merely of natural man, but of Germanic man. The antagonist of Germanic man became the Jew, the embodiment of the urban man, the man of civilization. A money economy, for example, as the product of disintegrative civilization, was associated with Jews, who were buyers, sellers, and lenders. Whereas rootedness was an essential element of Volk, the Wandering Jew became the symbol of the flesh-and-blood Jews, condemned to eternal homelessness for having rejected the Messiah, whose fathers or forefathers had lived outside Germany, in other lands.

After Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of Vienna, the Germans too their revenge on the French and the Jews. The Congress of Vienna had provided for full civil and political rights "to differing parties of the Christian religion," but the "civil betterment" of the Jews was put off for further study. The Congress stated that Jews could retain such rights as they already had, but nearly everywhere in Germany the rights that the Jews had won were disavowed and rescinded. (Prussia was an exception: only some Jewish rights were abolished; most were retained.)

A cyclical pattern in German political life began to emerge. The Congress of Vienna marked the first of four such cycles in subsequent German history that were to appear with startling regularity every two decades—long periods of reaction, repression, conservatism, and an Semitism following brief spells of liberalism and the expansion of rights. In all cycles the position of the Jews gradually improved, economically and educationally, even if their political rights were curtailed or denied. The changes in Jewish occupational or educational status served to alter the specific arguments of anti-Semitic agitation.

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unification of Germany as a triumph of German liberalism that began to turn conservative, reactionary, and anti-Semitic in 1873. The fourth cycle, beginning after World War I, was marked by the simultaneity of both its liberal and its reactionary phases.

Not only did the German states abrogate Jewish rights from 1813 on, but the *furor teutonicus* that had found no satisfaction in the Congress of Vienna expressed itself in violent attacks and pogroms against the Jews. Peasants and burghers demonstrated and rioted in Bavaria, Württemberg, and elsewhere against Jewish rights. Some cities even attempted to banish the Jews altogether. But the most violent pogroms, whose like had not been witnessed in Europe since the Middle Ages, came with the "Hepl Hepl" movement, first erupting in Würzburg in 1819 and rapidly spreading throughout Germany. The origin of this movement was obscure, but it is generally conceded to have been an outburst of resentment against Meternich's repression of German nationalistic propaganda and activities. The movement called for "revenge" against the Jews, "who are living among us and who are increasing like locusts. . . . Our battlerey will be 'Hepl Hepl Hepl Death and destruction to all the Jews!'" It was the first major chapter in the history of German nationalism in which the Jews were marked as the enemy.

Meanwhile, hostility to the Jews began to emerge from the newly developing socialist movement. That anti-Jewish outlook had two sources: first, the atheist, anti-Christian bias condemning Judaism as the antecedent of Christianity, and second, the anti-capitalist ideology that depicted the Jew as the embodiment of capitalism, the banker, the middleman, the parasitic profiteer. First to articulate this leftist anti-Semitism was Bruno Bauer (1809-1882), who in 1842 published an article on the Jewish question, which he supplemented and issued the following year as a separate book, *Die Judenfrage*. In this work he argued against political equality for the Jews. Orthodox Judaism was, in his view, an anachronistic phenomenon, whereas Reform Judaism was worthless; the Jews had never contributed to the civilization of the world—arguments that were later to become the stock-in-trade of the anti-Semitic right. Marx disputed Bauer's ideas on the ground that his view of the Jews as a religious group was distorted. The true Jewish religion, Marx argued, was *Schacher* (haggling, huckstering) and their god was money. Jews would first have to emancipate themselves from this "religion" of theirs; then their religious consciousness would disappear and human emancipation would be possible.

But despite the opposition to Jewish emancipation and the antipathy to Jews, the oncoming Revolution of 1848 heralded a growing liberalization in public opinion. When the National Assembly convened in Frank-

furt and formulated a constitution, it included a section on "the fundamental rights of the German people," which declared that "the enjoyment of civil and political rights is neither dependent upon, nor restricted by, religious creed."⁷ There was no question here of a bountiful bestowal of rights upon Jews by a graciously consenting ruler. The Jews were here equal beneficiaries of rights granted to all. The accomplishment was due to the overwhelmingly liberal character of the body. It was also the achievement of Gabriel Riesser (1806-1863), the notable advocate of Jewish emancipation during the previous two decades, who had been elected to the Frankfurt parliament. But within a year reaction set in. Bismarck was later to say that the great mistake of 1848-1849 was to think that the great questions of the day would be settled by "resolutions and majorities" rather than by "blood and iron." It was a judgment that bespoke the spirit that would later dominate German politics, where blood would erase resolutions and iron crush majorities.

For Jews 1848 was two-faced. The liberal constitution enacted a great principle that remained barely fulfilled, for its implementation depended on the individual states. In the very heat of revolutionary ardor counter-emancipatory trends came alive, and their pressure on the state governments was irresistible. When news of the revolution in Paris reached the peasants in the Rhineland, they too revolted, seizing land, destroying tax and tithe records, burning castles, and pogromizing Jews. Revolutionary propaganda called for wiping out the nobility, assassinating the officials, establishing a republic, and expelling the Jews from Germany. The popular agitation in many states brought about restrictions of Jewish rights or failure even to grant them. In Bavaria, for example, petitions with eighty thousand signatures submitted to the Chamber of Reich Counselors opposing Jewish emancipation succeeded in their purpose.

The liberals were too weak and too indecisive to withstand the reaction of the next decade. (Weakness and indecisiveness became hallmarks of German liberal politics—in the late 1870s vis-à-vis Bismarck and, still later, in the Weimar regime.) The Conservative party was founded in 1848 as a vehicle for the counterrevolution, and the 1850s witnessed the expansion and elaboration of an anti-Semitism that was not only political, but also Volkist and racist. Then Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897), historian and novelist, began publishing his massive *Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Sozial-Politik* (*The Natural History of the Volk as the Foundation of a Germanic Sociopolitical System*), idealizing precapitalist German society, condemning contemporary commercial and industrial developments. Then Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891), later the Volkist patron saint of the anti-Semitic movement, began his career with an attack on Christianity and contemporary theology. Event-

ually Lagarde would call for an expurgation of the Jewish elements from Christianity and for its transformation into a Christian-Germanic faith.⁸ The Germans, he believed, were too soft for the Jews to be allowed to live together with them: "Every Jew is proof of the enfeeblement of our national life and of the worthlessness of what we call the Christian religion."⁹

Lagarde, in another essay, was to write of Jews as vermin:

One would need a heart as hard as crocodile hide not to feel sorry for the poor exploited Germans and—which is identical—not to hate the Jews and despise those who—out of humanity!—defend these Jews or who are too cowardly to trample this usurious vermin to death. With trichinae and bacilli one does not negotiate, nor are trichinae and bacilli to be educated; they are exterminated as quickly and thoroughly as possible.¹⁰

That imagery was to be repeated time and again until Hitler appropriated it and applied it with terrible literalness.

Meanwhile, the new "science" of race was developing, under the impetus of advances in anthropology and philology. Christian Lassen (1802-1871), a learned professor of ancient civilizations at the University of Bonn, in his *Indische Altertumskunde (Indian Antiquities)*, argued that among the Caucasians, only Semites and Aryans built up human civilizations. He counterposed one against the other: "History proves that Semites do not possess the harmony of psychical forces that distinguishes the Aryans." But the Semite has other qualities: he is "selfish and exclusive."

Then Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) became convinced that "the racial question overshadows all other problems of history, that it holds the key to them all, and that the inequality of the races from whose fusion a people is formed is enough to explain the whole course of its destiny." Though Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races*, published in Paris 1853-1855, was not to be translated into German for another forty years, the idea of race as the determinant of the rise and fall of civilizations appeared among the German philologists and ethnologists and philosophers. Social degeneration, they believed, was caused by racial degeneration. Racial mixture, the dissipation of the pure racial blood, brought mediocrity and decline. Gobineau's basic scheme was to serve as a framework for the refinements of Chamberlain and other epigoni who saw the rise and fall of civilization as dependent on the preservation of the racial purity of the Germanic or Aryan race.

Richard Wagner (1813-1883), in his specifically Teutonic racialism and ferocious hatred of Jews, surpassed earlier Volkist anti-Semites. "Emancipation from the yoke of Judaism appears to us the foremost

necessity," he wrote. He was to develop, in his music and journalism, the idea of a de-Judaized, hence de-Christianized, Germanic religion, in which the pagan Teutonic elements merged with, or displaced, the Christian ones.

The third cycle of liberalism/reaction came with the unification of Germany. Unification in itself represented a liberal turn in German history, if only in the modest sense that it abolished the particularism of the various states, introduced administrative uniformity, and erased the internal trade and tariff barriers. Bismarck needed liberals' support to achieve his ambitions, and in exchange he conceded universal political and civic rights. (In 1847, as a member of the Prussian Diet, he had opposed political rights for Jews.) The Reichstag of the North German Federation on July 3, 1869, voted such rights into law, abolishing all restrictions of civil and political rights because of religious creed and making participation in local, state, and federal government independent of religious creed.¹¹

The unification of Germany introduced new facets to German anti-Semitism. The leaders of the liberals were Jews (Eduard Lasker and Ludwig Bamberger); both liberal parties (the National Liberal party and its split-off, the Progress party) and liberalism in general became the target of Volkist hostility and anti-Semitism. The unification of Germany and the creation of the nation-state forced the Germans into modernity. The nation-state was a concomitant of a new industrial, commercial, financial way of life that was changing the old bases of society and overturning that antiquated hierarchical order which, in Volkist minds, had become identified with the German Volkist past.

The expansive role of capital in the new state intensified charges that the Jews were using their newly acquired rights to exploit the Germans and manipulate their interests. The economic crisis of 1873 was adduced by the anti-Semites as further evidence that the Jews engaged in financial manipulations to undermine the country. Feverish and unchecked speculation had boomed in the wake of the spectacular growth of industry, railroad expansion, foreign trade, and banking that unification had stimulated and that the successful war against France had emboldened. Then, with the onset of a worldwide depression in 1873, came financial collapse in Germany. The crash was blamed on the Jews and the liberals, who were identified as Jews anyway.

In the next six years, the period of economic depression, a complete reorientation took place in German politics, with an authoritarian right turn by Bismarck. He no longer needed his liberal supporters; his Prussian conservatism and absolutism made him the natural enemy of

the rising working class and its political spokesman, the Social Democratic party. The attack on both Jews and liberals began to gather momentum, from both right-wing Conservative sources and from populist agitators representing the "little people" in Germany who had indeed been severely affected by the financial disaster. The stereotype of the Jew as international financier became more common. Catholics joined in using the Jews and the liberals as the sticks with which to beat Bismarck and the government.

The first assault came from Wilhelm Marr, an unsuccessful journalist who blamed the Jews for his professional failure, and who is credited with having invented the word "anti-Semitism" (whose use in this context developed out of racial theories about the "Semitic" and "Aryan" races). His pamphlet *Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanentum* ("The Victory of Jewry over Germanism"), published in 1873, became his first success, going through twelve editions in six years. Drawing on the ideas of race and Volkist nationalism, Marr argued that their "racial qualities" had enabled Jews not only to survive through the ages, but to become "the first major power in the West" in the nineteenth century. The Germanic state, he pessimistically concluded, had degenerated too far to withstand Jewish superiority.

Political anti-Semitism began in Berlin with Adolf Stöcker, though Stöcker did not actually begin with overt, explicit anti-Semitism. In 1878, in Berlin, where he was court preacher, he founded the Christian Social Workers' party. The name itself suggested the party's implicit anti-Semitic bias.* His purposes were to provide a political countervehicle to the Social Democratic party and to combat what he regarded as the dangerous and debilitating secularization and demoralization of society in the capital city. But the workers who came to Christian Social political rallies came only to mock and heckle.

The Progressives continued to hold their strength in Berlin in the election of 1878, but elsewhere in Germany they and the National Liberals lost about half their seats. Gains were made by the Conservatives and the Catholic Center party. That Reichstag gave Bismarck what he had previously been denied: passage of the "law against the pernicious pursuits of Social Democracy," which declared the Social Democratic party illegal and abolished freedom of speech, press, and assembly. (The law was extended four times, with the support of the National Liberals, and remained in force until 1890, when Bismarck resigned. It inaugurated

* The word "Christian" in a European organization's name indicated its anti-Semitic character. The classic illustration is Admiral Horthy's joyous embrace of the secretary of the American YMCA as the head of "such an important anti-Semitic organization."

a pattern that would be repeated in Germany's later history and showed how fragile was the new nation's commitment to political liberalism.)

Stöcker's failure to win support at a time when the whole country was making a right turn indicated to him that he was appealing to the wrong group. Indeed, the people at his meetings who shared his discontent with state and society were not workers, but members of the *Mittelstand*, which was then beginning to emerge as a political force in German society. Consisting of diverse elements whose economic interests and status drives were not necessarily common or consistent with each other—small farmers and peasants, artisans, small businessmen, lower echelons of officialdom, and lower levels of professionals—the *Mittelstand* shared a hostility to the rapidly burgeoning industrial urban society and to its political arrangements.

Farmers and peasants feared that industrialism would bring urbanization and destroy their land and way of life. Artisans feared that the factory system and mass production would render them and their crafts obsolete. Small businessmen were apprehensive that the national expansion of trade and a more rational organization of business would make them economically uncompetitive. The lower professionals, white-collar workers, and petty officials felt that their status was being lowered and that the old values they defended were being eroded, if not actually destroyed, by the emergent modern society. Only the workers and the industrialists, it appeared, were in harmony with contemporary economic and industrial developments.

In the next forty years the *Mittelstand* turned increasingly to the right. Its constituent groups shared an incredible susceptibility to political propaganda that blamed the Jews for the changes that were undermining their traditional ways of life. The "Jewish conspiracy" became the single and simple explanation for whatever had gone wrong in their world. To this audience, consequently, on September 19, 1879, at a Christian Social meeting, Stöcker made his first anti-Semitic speech: "What We Demand of Modern Jewry."¹²

He began, as he put it, "in the spirit of Christian love." Modern Jewry, he declared, was "a great danger to German national life." He did not mean the Jewish religion as such, he claimed, though he characterized Orthodox Judaism as "a form of religion which is dead at its very core" and Reform Judaism as nothing more than "a pitiful remnant of the Age of Enlightenment." But modern Jews were "most certainly a force against religion," a destructive, secularizing, anti-Christian force, who, themselves not believing in Judaism, persisted in remaining Jewish. Using the platitudes of Volkist/racial anti-Semitism, Stöcker described the Jews as "a people within a people, a state within a state, a separate tribe

within a foreign race," who pitted "their unbroken Semitic character against Teutonic nature, their rigid cult of law or their hatred of Christians against Christianity." Germans must protect themselves against the Jews. That protection could come only through "wise legislation." Stöcker's "wise" legislation included a number of general proposals and three explicitly anti-Semitic ones: (1) reintroduction of the denominational census "so as to find out the disproportion between Jewish capital and Christian labor"; (2) limiting the number of appointments of Jewish judges in proportion to the Jews in the population; (3) removing Jewish teachers from the elementary schools, while strengthening the schools' "Christian-Germanic spirit."

Stöcker's legislation originated out of both populist/leftist and rightist sources. The leftist proposals were those directed toward control of the credit system, the regulation of the stock exchange, easements (or complete abolition) of the mortgage system—measures designed to protect the peasant or small landholder, the small businessman, and the small investor from the manipulative power of big capital. They were implicitly anti-Semitic, since in the popular mind big capital was Jewish. The rightist proposals were explicitly anti-Semitic. With these proposals Stöcker, like many after him, succeeded in attracting followers from both the left and the right.

Eighteen-eighty was a watershed year, the start of a torrent of anti-Semitism that did not abate for nearly twenty years. It was as if all the quiet streams of prejudice conjoined in a massive flow of anti-Semitic hate, inundating the whole country. It began at the end of 1879, when Heinrich von Treitschke, National Liberal and prestigious professor of history at the University of Berlin, started a series of articles on the Jewish question in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, which he edited. "Even in circles of the most highly educated, among men who would reject with disgust any ideas of ecclesiastical intolerance or national arrogance, there resounds as if from one mouth: *Die Juden sind unser Unglück!*"¹⁸

"The Jews are our misfortune"—the phrase was to ring down through later German generations. Heinrich Class, a leading anti-Semite a generation later, wrote that the phrase "became a part of my body and soul when I was twenty years old; it essentially influenced my later political work." Issued in pamphlet form, Treitschke's articles gave reinforcement and professorial authoritativeness to the anti-Semitic movement. Treitschke spoke, the anti-Semites said, "for thousands, perhaps millions of his countrymen."

In the fall of 1880 the "Anti-Semites' Petition" began to be circulated. Initiated by two schoolteachers (Ernst Henrici and Bernhard Förster,

Nietzsche's brother-in-law) and a minor aristocrat (Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg), it was distributed with the help of a newly organized association of German students, explicitly organized as an anti-Semitic group. In the preamble, addressed to Bismarck, the petitioners asked for "the emancipation of the German people from a form of alien domination which it cannot endure for any length of time."¹⁴ The Jew was depicted as the exploitative "master" of the laboring German people who was gaining control of German urban and rural property and who would destroy the German fatherland. Jews were an alien people, whose very feeling and thinking were completely alien to the German Volk. If the ideals of the Germanic Volk were not to be destroyed, if the German people were not to fall into the economic slavery of the Jew, steps would have to be taken to liberate the German people from this Jewish danger.

The following steps were proposed: (1) the immigration of foreign Jews was to be restricted at the least, if not entirely prevented; (2) Jews were to be excluded from all government positions, and their appointment to the judiciary was to be subject to appropriate limitation; (3) the Christian character of the grammar school, even if attended by Jewish pupils, was to be strictly maintained and only Christian teachers admitted in all higher schools the appointment of Jewish teachers could be made only in exceptional cases; (4) the census of the Jewish population was to be resumed.

While the petition was circulating (its center of strength was in Prussia and especially Berlin), a Progressive deputy asked the Minister of the Interior what the Prussian government intended to do about it. The intimation was intended to elicit a condemnation, but the minister *pro forma* replied that the government did not intend to abrogate Jewish rights as seen by the petitioners as an encouraging sign. When finally presented to Bismarck, in April 1881, the "Anti-Semites' Petition" had 225,000 signatures, mostly from Prussia, with 9,000 from Bavaria. Some 4,000 university students had signed it. (A counterpetition, circulated by liberal students, did poorly. At the University of Göttingen, for instance the liberals received 180 signatures, compared with 400 for the "Anti-Semites' Petition.")

At the time of the interpellation, Berthold Auerbach, the Jewish novelist who had been an ardent German nationalist and whose most successful work was the romantic idealization of the German peasant life of 1848, *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (*Black Forest Village Tales*, 1848), was in despair. In a letter from Berlin, November 23, 1880, he wrote: "Livid and working in vain! That is the crushing impression I have of the two-day debate in the House of Deputies. And if I tell myself again the

it is perhaps not so bad, the horrible fact remains that such coarseness, such deceit, and such hatred are still possible."¹⁶ A few months later, Leopold Zunz, then nearly eighty-seven years old, took another view, in a letter to a friend: "Thus I live, unconcerned about the anti-Jewish agitating swine-eaters: their din is a childish imitation of the Crusades, no longer in style. World literature today and in the newspaper press are more powerful than all the blockheads aping the Middle Ages."¹⁶

In 1880 Ernst Henrici, one of the organizers of the "Anti-Semites' Petition," founded a new anti-Semitic party, the *Soziale Reichspartei* (the Reich Social party), which, in contrast to Stöcker's Christian conservative anti-Semitism, disseminated a radical racist spirit: "If it is a question of racial characteristics, then both body and spirit must be kept in mind. . . . The religion of the Jews is a racial religion." Wherever Henrici spoke, he aroused masses to anti-Semitic violence. In Berlin his agitation at mass meetings around the "Anti-Semites' Petition" led to street brawls, attacks on Jews, window smashing, the hoodlums shouting "Juden raus!" In July 1881 he came to Neustettin, where he harangued the population with his anti-Semitic views. Serious anti-Jewish riots followed, and right after he left, the Neustettin synagogue was burned down. Henrici's party lasted barely two years, but he had succeeded in setting up a model for a radicalized political anti-Semitism.

In 1881 the *Deutsche Reformpartei*,* patterned after Stöcker's party in Berlin, was founded in Dresden. Unsuccessful as a political party, it took on new life as a parapolitical organization, with the formation of *Reformvereine* (reform unions) throughout Germany, groups in which anti-Semitism in all varieties flourished. By 1885 there were 52 such unions; by 1890, 136. The Reformvereine attracted members of the Mittelstand and provided an organizational framework of sorts for the burgeoning anti-Semitic movement. (The various leaders of the anti-Semitic movement tried, from time to time, to form a united organization, but their ideological differences, personal rivalries, and psychological instabilities conspired against them.)

The Vereine came under different intellectual influences in the anti-Semitic movement, from both the left and the right. In Westphalia, for instance, the branches were largely affected by the ideas of Eugen Karl Dühring, an anarchist with a strong following among the Social Democrats. A philosopher and an economist, he taught at the University of Berlin until his inability to get along with the university authorities

* "Reform" was a word appropriated largely by the right and usually meant restrictions on free-trade policies. "Reform" movements often took on a populist, anti-Semitic coloration.

forced his retirement in 1877. Like Marr and other malcontents, he attributed his failures to Jewish plotting. He had first propagated a proto-national type of socialism, but by 1881 the Jewish question had moved to the center of his mental universe, when he published *Die Judenfrage als Rassen-Sitten- und Kulturfrage* (*The Jewish Question as a Racial, Moral, and Cultural Question*). In this work he argued that the German spirit had sold itself to Judaism, that Germany's "social corruption" was the consequence of the parasitic Jews' settling in Germany and bringing about Germany's complete deterioration. Developing the crudest and most vicious racism, Dühring looked upon the Jews as a "counter-race" separated from all humanity, whom neither conversion nor assimilation could affect because their basic nature was evil and unchangeable. He shared the Wagnerian thesis that Christianity was a product of a "Hebraic orientalism," and that those who clung to the "entire" Christian tradition could not truly oppose Judaism or defend the "Nordic tradition." His influence among university students was substantial, beginning with his economic ideas and ending with his anti-Semitic racism.

The Leipzig branch of the Reformvereine was headed by Theodor Fritsch (1844-1933), a linchpin in the anti-Semitic movement, holding it together as political organizer, publisher, editor, author from its early political/nationalist stirrings in the 1880s until Hitler's accession to power. He bought up an unsuccessful anti-Semitic publishing house and in 1882 began to issue the *Antisemitische Correspondenz*. He was less interested in forming an anti-Semitic political party than in infusing all political parties with anti-Semitism.

Political anti-Semitism began also in Austria at this time. In Germany the concomitants to anti-Semitism were German nationalism and anti-modernity. In Austria the key element was Pan-Germanism, union with Germany and the preservation of the "German" character of "German" territory. The Austrian Germans stressed their Germanness to distinguish themselves from the East European nationalities in the Hapsburg Empire and to separate Cisleithan Austria from Transleithan Hungary. The doctrine of Pan-Germanism was first formulated by Georg von Schönerer and the university intellectuals who had supported him. Schönerer, in turn, acknowledged Dühring as teacher and master. Thus is tradition transmitted: Schönerer learned from Dühring, and Hitler learned from Schönerer.

Schönerer began his political career as a liberal in the *Reichsrat* in 1873, but he soon opted for a more radical economic program (his leftist heritage from Dühring) and a preference for German nationalism. In 1882 Schönerer and his followers formulated the so-called "Linz Program," which combined Pan-Germanism with a reform program that was part

socialist and part romantically anti-industrialist. Anti-Semitism was scarcely apparent. But like Stöcker, Schönerer learned that anti-Semitism was the mainstay of the Mittelstand elements who supported him. He took his cue from the farmers and the craftsmen who saw the Jew as their enemy and regarded industrialism and urbanism as Jewish machinations. In 1885 Schönerer added one more point to the Linz Program that became the central one: "The removal of Jewish influence from all sections of public life is indispensable for carrying out the reforms aimed at." He introduced anti-Semitic motions in the Reichsrat, and in 1887 he sponsored a bill to restrict East European Jewish immigration into Austria. Anti-Semitism was to become the obverse side of Schönerer's German nationalism, the negative definition of his position, and as he lost his political footing and influence, both his nationalism and his anti-Semitism were to become, in the long years ahead, irrational obsessions colored by freakishness. His hatred of Jews and Catholics constituted also a rejection of Christianity; the pagan practices he adopted were no mere bizarre oddities, but reflected the longing for an idealized primitive world of German tribesmen in dark Teutonic forests. Though Hitler had much empathy for these hallucinated visions that Schönerer was propagating to his coteries of cultists, he despised Schönerer for abandoning himself to these arcane notions and failing to make political capital of such precious assets as German nationalism and anti-Semitism.

If Schönerer turned out to be a discredit to anti-Semitic politics in Austria, Karl Lueger (1844-1910) was its shining success. He made anti-Semitism politically viable, acceptable, and, finally, respectable. A master of pragmatic politics, an antinationalist and anti-Prussian, devoted to Emperor and empire, Lueger saw anti-Semitism mainly as a political expedient. In a few years Lueger's Christian Social party attained the political success that Schönerer had dreamed of, but never achieved.

Perhaps it was a matter of timing, for in Germany, too, that was the time when the anti-Semitic parties began to amass electoral strength. Within a decade they had succeeded in infecting all the major political parties, except the Social Democrats, with the poison of anti-Semitism. It began in 1887 when Otto Böckel was elected to the Reichstag as a deputy from a poor peasant constituency in Hesse, winning a long-held Conservative seat. A librarian who had made the collection of German folklore his hobby and had thus become familiar with peasant life, Böckel had a year earlier helped found a branch of the Reformvereine in Kassel and joined with Fritsch in an attempt to form an anti-Semitic alliance. He campaigned on a populist economic program, stirring the peasants with his fiery slogan: "Liberate yourselves from the Jewish middlemen!" Böckel believed that Jews were a racial group whose racial essence could

not be affected by conversion or intermarriage and that Jews in Germany should never be allowed to have more than the rights of aliens, because they were by nature aliens. He argued that the Conservatives failed in their treatment of the Jewish question, which he regarded as the central "national question" in Germany. This "political" approach, with its unexpected success, threatened, above all, the Conservatives, who, then in a temporary alliance with the National Liberals, had soft-pedaled anti-Semitism. For the 1890 election Böckel organized the *Antisemitische Volkspartei* (Anti-Semitic People's Party), whose program demanded "the repeal, by legal means, of Jewish emancipation" and "placing the Jews under alien legislation." His party won five seats in Hesse, his Conservative and other anti-Semitic rivals having withdrawn lest they split the vote.

Böckel was not an isolated phenomenon. In a by-election in 1892, in a rural district in eastern Germany, similarly without party backing or organization funds, Hermann Ahlwardt defeated his Conservative opponent. A schoolteacher who had advanced to school principal, his financial peccadilloes had entangled him in debts and scandals—though using an ancient staple of anti-Semitic propaganda, he attributed these entirely to Jewish usurers. He was fired when found dipping into the school till. Then, in 1890, he published a book called *Der Verzweiflungs-kampf der arischen Völker mit den Judentum (The Despairing Struggle of the Aryan Peoples with Jewry)*, in which he depicted the Jews as arthropods with claws in every sphere of German life. Two nasty anti-Semitic pamphlets followed, which brought him sentences of imprisonment for false charges, but having been meanwhile elected to the Reichstag, he enjoyed parliamentary immunity. His reckless rantings and his paranoia did not ensure his success in the Reichstag (eventually the anti-Semite came to regard him as a liability), but for years his constituency returned him to office, believing that he was a victim of nefarious Jewish power.

His racial anti-Semitism contained the familiar arguments drawn from the leftist, Volkist, and racist repertory. In a Reichstag address in 1895 supporting a bill to halt Jewish immigration into Germany, he analyzed Jewish "racial" qualities. The Jews were "beasts of prey" and "choleric bacilli." The only chance the Germans had to defend themselves was to "exterminate those beasts of prey," and the best way to start would be to keep them out of the country.¹⁷

After Ahlwardt's stunning success in 1892, the Conservatives drew what they thought was the appropriate conclusion: anti-Semitism was a legitimate political weapon to be used to attain political power. At their party convention at the end of that year, the Conservatives revised their

party program to include not only implicitly anti-Semitic planks (for instance, "We demand Christian authority and Christian teachers for Christian pupils"), but also the explicit anti-Semitic statement "We fight the multifarious and obtrusive Jewish influence that decomposes our people's life." No greater gain could have been made, no greater respectability could have accrued to political anti-Semitism. No longer the possession of small splinter and sometimes crackpot parties, anti-Semitism had become the property of the most prestigious party of Imperial Germany.

The 1890s brought new vitality and organizational support to the anti-Semitic movement. The successes of populist racial anti-Semites had pushed the reluctant anti-Semitic "moderates" into the extremist camp, but even more significant for the solidification of political anti-Semitism was the anxiety engendered by the tremendous expansion of the Social Democratic movement. In 1890, the first election after the expiration of Bismarck's anti-Socialist law, the Social Democrats amassed over 1.4 million votes, winning 35 seats (they had previously held 11). Indeed, the only significant opposition to the rising tide of political anti-Semitism that was inundating Germany's political institutions came from industrial labor and from the Social Democratic party. "Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools," August Bebel, the party's leader, had said when leftist, populist anti-Semitism threatened to infect the Socialist movement. The party continued firmly to resist anti-Semitism and succeeded in immunizing its members and supporters against it.

How did the Social Democrats succeed in warding off anti-Semitism, when everyone else, it seemed, succumbed so easily? For one thing, the party leadership early set a model for the ranks by its aggressive articulated opposition. In a generally authoritarian society, that authoritative denunciation of anti-Semitism must have had some effect. For another, the ideology of the Social Democratic movement interpreted all economic, social, and political phenomena in terms of an all-encompassing Marxist theory. Social Democrats did not need anti-Semitism, another all-embracing theory, to explain the great events of their lives. Finally, the Social Democrats, as industrial workers, had a stake in industrial urban society. With fewer romantic illusions about the primitive past, they had greater ambitions for a share in the comfort, convenience, and wealth that their labor was helping to produce. This modernist outlook, then, helped to render them impervious to anti-Semitism.

The Mittelstand, in contrast, viewed much of this expanding restless urban society through Volkist eyes and increasingly gave its support not only to conservative centrist parties (Conservative and Catholic Center

parties), to Germany's expanding imperialism, but also to candida representing a gamut of anti-Semitic opinion. From 1887, with Böck election, until the outbreak of World War I, about ninety anti-Semitic deputies were elected to the Reichstag. The various parties grouped a regrouped, for a while united, sometimes sponsored jointly by the Conservatives. In 1893, for example, candidates of anti-Semitic parties polled 263,000 votes, but if those who ran jointly on the Conservative line added, the anti-Semitic vote was as high as 400,000. As for the anti-Semitic deputies, they were themselves the essence of the Mittelstand. Nearly were Protestants, none were of the aristocracy (except for two chro anti-Semites), and none from labor. Mostly they were small entrepreneurs and craftsmen who had experienced economic hardships, teachers, low civil servants, white-collar employees, and lawyers—the same occupational groups that were also to provide support for the NSDAP after World War I. They all shared a sense of frustration, deep resentments—sold rationally articulable—against "outside" forces that prevented the attainment of appropriate status or professional success. Cultists turned up in these movements, back-to-nature advocates, food faddists, occultists all found a place in the anti-Semitic movement.

The year 1893 was the organizational highpoint for the Mittelstand. The *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League) was founded a vehicle for the expression of middle-class nationalist imperialism; militarism, to cultivate "German national values all over the world." Under its first president, Professor Ernst Hasse, anti-Semitism was latent and secondary. In 1908, when Heinrich Class became president, the league became overtly anti-Semitic and closed its membership to Jews. At the turn of the century, its membership reached 20,000, with professors and university lecturers (over 5,000), small businessmen (4,9 teachers and civil servants (3,760), as the largest occupational groups.

Also founded in 1893 was the *Deutschnationaler Handlungsgehilfenverband* (National Germanic League of Clerks), which started modestly with a group of 30 clerks in Hamburg; by 1913 it had nearly 150 members. The organization's constitution specified that "Jews or persons whose character is not blameless" could not become members. (The league was not only anti-Jewish, it was also anti-feminist, in an attempt to maintain white-collar employment as a male preserve.) Both the *deutscher Verband* and the clerks' league functioned as political pressure groups, throwing their strength behind candidates of the various ruling and anti-Semitic parties and raising funds for their candid organizations.

The third parapolitical Mittelstand organization founded in 1893, probably the most influential, was the *Bund der Landwirte* (Agra

League), which was to become a major force in right-wing politics and to transform the Conservative party. Though its leadership remained in the hands of relatively few big landowners, its rank-and-file members were small farmers. By the end of the decade, the Agrarian League had nearly 250,000 members. What held the diverse and sometimes divergent economic and social interests of the large-scale and small-scale farmers together was a German nationalism defined by anti-Semitism. At its first general assembly in 1894, the Agrarian League restricted its membership to Christians and announced itself as "an opponent of Jewry, which has become altogether too mighty in our country and has acquired a decisive say in the press, in trade, and on the exchanges." A year later the league's organ declared: "Agriculture and Jewry must fight to the death, until one or the other lies lifeless—or at least powerless—on the ground." It advocated boycotting Jewish stores, prohibiting social relations between Germans and Jews, and expelling Jews from Germany. In the Agrarian League, as in increasing numbers of German organizations and institutions, German nationalism and racist, Volkist anti-Semitism combined to form an effective, powerful political pressure group that radicalized German conservatism and made anti-Semitism a commonplace staple of any right-of-center political body.

The student organizations, the gymnastic and sports organizations (the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, whose ancestry went back to Father Jahn, was not only Volkist nationalist but explicitly anti-Semitic), the youth and back-to-nature movements, though apolitical, added variety and density to political anti-Semitism, thriving as they did on irrationality, anti-intellectualism, race superiority, and race hate.

Anti-Semitic propaganda proliferated luxuriantly in the 1890s in the rich soil of political success and organizational abundance and grew into the twentieth century. In 1894 a society was formed by Gobineau's German translator, a disciple of Lagarde, to honor Gobineau and revive his work. The Wagner family circle gave the society its primary support, but when the *Alldeutscher Verband* became a supporting member of the Gobineau Society, a new union of racist Volkism and the Mittelstand was formed. Gobineau's work, as well as Houston Stewart Chamberlain's, became required reading for rightist German students. Julius Langbehn (1815-1907), a new Volkist prophet of discontent, having been exhorted by the tireless Fritsch to a hard anti-Semitic line, emerged with his dyspeptic version of cultural anti-Semitism. Langbehn saw to it that Lagarde's work was revived (a new edition appeared in 1891). Heinrich Class, whose pseudonymous book *Wenn Ich der Kaiser wär' (If I Were Kaiser)*, in which he expounded his anti-Semitic theories, first published in 1912, went into five editions before war broke out, wrote

of the impact on him of the works of Lagarde, Count Gobineau, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain: "At the end of the century, I plunged into them, and I do not know from which of these three great men derived the most profit."¹⁸

At the turn of the century anti-Semitism had infected Germany. A book dealer found vast quantities of anti-Semitic literature in the libraries that he bought for resale. "Every year," he wrote, "tens of thousands of anti-Semitic pamphlets are sent free to all officials of the state and members of the upper ten thousand."¹⁹

The next cycle of anti-Semitism came with World War I. The election of 1912 to the Reichstag had given a massive majority to the Progressive and Social Democrats. Political anti-Semitism, it seemed, was on the decline. But it erupted in the midst of the war, following the euphoria of patriotism at the outbreak of war, when even Jews had been included within the circle of national brotherhood.

By mid-1916 the war had begun to go badly. There were no military victories to compensate for the food shortages, the hardships, the wounded and the dead in battle. The Jews became the "explanation" for whatever was going wrong. The Jews, the accusations went, were not fighting for Germany. Those in the army had cushy jobs behind the front; Jews were profiteering out of the war, getting rich from the war corporations. Popular anti-Semitism once again rose to the surface. Just as this grumbling discontent was turning into a massive rumble, and under pressure of the officer corps, the war hero Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was appointed to replace the chief of the General Staff, who had been charged with the army's military failures. Another war hero, Erich Ludendorff, was appointed Hindenburg's aide (Ludendorff in reality exercised the authority and made Hindenburg's decisions). A few days after Ludendorff's appointment, the War Ministry ordered a religious census of the members of the armed forces, according to service at the front, in garrisons, or behind desks, and of the employees in the war corporations (war industry). In October, as if ignorant of these administrative measures, an anti-Semitic member of the Reichstag proposed that such a survey be made of the armed forces and a member of the Catholic Center party moved the same for the war corporations. The National Liberals, some forty years earlier accused of being the party of Jewry went along with the proposal. Only the Progressives and Social Democrats were opposed. This coalition of authoritarian military leaders, anti-Semites, Catholic conservatives, and the components of the Mittelstand succeeded, without difficulty, in undermining the guarantee of equal rights of the Reichstag Act of 1869. The next two years of the war were marked

by a crescendo of anti-Semitism, which Hitler epitomized in *Mein Kampf*: "... In the year 1916-17 nearly the whole production was under the control of Jewish finance. . . . The spider was slowly beginning to suck the blood out of the people's pores."

The Weimar Republic, born out of defeat and revolution, despair and hope, emerged with a new constitution that at long last gave the Jews complete equality. But at the very time that Jews had just begun to enjoy those political and civic rights for which they had been striving for a century, anti-Semitism burst forth in its most extravagant form. The Weimar Republic and its constitution had become an extreme example of the difference between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*. The Jews now had the right to hold high public office (a few actually did), but they were also, in the minds of vast numbers of Germans, to blame for Germany's defeat, for the revolution, for the Munich Soviet, for the loss of the monarchy, for the passing of the past. They were the internal enemy. On February 24, 1920, just six months after the Weimar Constitution was enacted, the NSDAP issued its twenty-five-point program, which asserted that no Jew could ever be a member of the German Volk, that only persons of German blood could be regarded as members of the Volk and citizens of the German state. The *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP; German National People's Party), the postwar incarnation of the German right, was at its founding at the end of 1918, conservative, Christian, nationalist, though not yet anti-Semitic. But soon it was seized by the anti-Semitic madness, and in 1920 its party program took a stand "against the predominance of Jewry in government and public life." Parliamentary democracy survived in Germany for barely one decade, which witnessed the seemingly irresistible rise of the Nazis, the proliferation of anti-Semitic associations and societies—as many as 430—and of anti-Semitic periodicals—as many as 700. Anti-Semitic bills were introduced with shameless regularity into state and national legislatures. The youth of the country, especially the students at the universities, were overwhelmingly anti-Semitic (in Berlin student elections in 1921, two-thirds of the votes were cast for anti-Semitic candidates). Violence often ruled the streets, though Jews were not its only victims. After the assassination of Catholic leftist leader Matthias Erzberger, the war veterans, the members of the Free Corps, roaming the streets for victims and action, used to sing:

Knallt ab den Walter Rathenau
Die gottverdammte Judensau.
 (Mow down Walter Rathenau,
 The goddamned Jewish sow.)

And they did. By 1926 even the strictest law-abiding German Jews began to talk of learning how to develop their bodies and defend themselves.²⁰ There was no dearth of anti-Semitic propaganda. Before the end of 1920 the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, translated into German that year, had sold 120,000 copies. A Jewish reporter at that time wrote:

In Berlin I attended several meetings which were entirely devoted to the Protocols. The speaker was usually a professor, a teacher, an editor, a lawyer or someone of that kind. The audience consisted of members of the educated class, civil servants, tradesmen, former officers, ladies, above all students, students of all faculties and years of seniority. . . . Passions were whipped up to the boiling point.²¹

It was a world intoxicated with hate, driven by paranoia, enemies everywhere, the Jew lurking behind each one. The Germans were in search of a mysterious wholeness that would restore them to primeval happiness, destroying the hostile milieu of urban industrial civilization that the Jewish conspiracy had foisted on them.²²

"*Deutschland erwache, Juda verrecke*" became a commonplace slogan. In 1923 the National Socialists had won 800,000 votes. In 1930 they had 6.5 million. In 1932 nearly 14 million voters out of 45 million voted for the NSDAP, in the last free election of the Weimar Republic.

National Socialism was the consummation toward which the infamous anti-Semitic movements had striven for 150 years.

Chronology of Anti-Semitism

- 38 BCE Anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria, Egypt; many Jews were killed, and all the Jews were confined to a single area of the city.
- 19 CE Emperor Tiberius expels the Jews from Rome and Italy.
- 66 Massacre of the Jews of Alexandria, Egypt where 50,000 were killed.
- 325 After the ecumenical council, Nicaea, the Christian Church formulates its policy toward the Jews: the Jews must continue to exist for the sake of Christianity in seclusion and humiliation.
- 468 Persecutions of the Jews in Babylonia.
- 624-28 Jewish tribes of Hejaz (Arabia) destroyed by Muhammad.
- 628 Dagobert I expels Jews from Frankish kingdom.
- 632 Heraclius, Byzantine emperor, decrees forced baptism of all Jews in the Byzantine empire.
- 694-711 All Jews under Visigothic rule in Spain declared slaves, their possessions confiscated, and the Jewish religion is outlawed.
- 1012 Emperor Henry II of Germany expels from Mainz, the beginning of persecutions against Jews in Germany.
- 1096-99 First Crusade. Crusaders massacre the Jews of the Rhineland.
- 1144 First recorded blood libel at Norwich (England).
- 1146 Anti-Jewish riots in Rhineland by the Crusaders of the second Crusade.
- 1182 King Philip Augustus of France decrees the expulsion of the Jews from his kingdom and the confiscation of their real estate.
- 1190 Anti-Jewish riots in England; massacre at York and other cities.
- 1215 Fourth Lateran Council introduces the Jewish Badge.
- 1235 Blood libel at Fulda, Germany.
- 1236 Severe anti-Jewish persecutions in western France.
- 1240 Disputation of Paris which led to the burning of the Talmud.
- 1242 Burning of the Talmud in Paris.
- 1255 Blood libel at Lincoln, England.
- 1290 Expulsion of the Jews from England, the first of the great general expulsions of the Middle Ages.

- 1306 Expulsion of the Jews from France.
- 1321 Persecutions against Jews in central France in consequence of a false charge of their supposed collusion with the lepers.
- 1322 Expulsion from the kingdom of France.
- 1348-50 Black Death Massacres which spread throughout Spain, France, Germany and Austria, as a result of accusations that the Jews had caused the death of Christians by poisoning the wells and other water sources.
- 1389 Massacre of the Prague (Bohemia) community.
- 1391 Wave of massacres and conversions in Spain and Balearic Islands.
- 1394 Expulsion from the kingdom of France.
- 1399 Blood libel in Poznan.
- 1413-14 Disputation of Tortosa (Spain). The most important and longest of the Christian-Jewish disputations, the consequence of which was mass conversions and intensified persecutions.
- 1421 Persecutions of Jews in Vienna and its environs, confiscations of their possessions, and forcible conversions of Jewish children, 270 Jews burned at the stake, known as the Wiener Gesera (Vienna edict). Expulsion of Jews from Austria.
- 1435 Massacre and conversion of the Jews of Majorca.
- 1438 Establishment of mellahs (ghettos) in Morocco.
- 1452-53 John of Capistrano, Italian Franciscan friar, incites persecutions and expulsions of Jews from cities in Germany.
- 1473 Marranos of Valladolid and Cordoba, in Spain, massacred.
- 1474 Marranos of Segovia, Spain, massacred.
- 1480 Inquisition established in Spain.
- 1483 Torquemada appointed Inquisitor General of Spanish Inquisition. Expulsion of Jews from Warsaw.
- 1490-91 Blood libel in La Guardia, Spain, where the alleged victim became revered as a saint.
- 1492 Expulsion of the Jews from Spain.
- 1492-93 Expulsion from Sicily.
- 1495 Expulsion from Lithuania.
- 1496-97 Expulsion from Portugal; mass forced conversion.
- 1506 Massacre of Marranos in Lisbon.
- 1510 Expulsion of Jews from Brandenburg, Germany.

- 1516 Venice initiates the ghetto, the first in Christian Europe.
- 1531 Inquisition established in Portugal.
- 1535 Jews of Tunisia expelled and massacred.
- 1541 Expulsion from the kingdom of Naples, Prague and crown cities.
- 1544 Martin Luther, German religious reformer, attacks the Jews with extreme virulence.
- 1550 Expulsion from Genoa, Italy.
- 1551 Expulsion from Bavaria.
- 1553 Burning of the Talmud in Rome.
- 1554 Censorship of Hebrew books introduced in Italy.
- 1556 Burning of Marranos at Ancona, Italy.
- 1567 Expulsion from the republic of Genoa (Italy).
- 1569 Expulsion from the Papal States (Italy).
- 1614 Vincent Fettmilch, anti-Jewish guild leader in Frankfurt, Germany, attacks with his followers the Jews of the town and forces them to leave the city.
- 1624 Ghetto established at Ferrara, Italy.
- 1648-49 Massacres initiated by Bogdan Chmielnicki, leader of the Cossacks, and peasant uprising against Polish rule in the Ukraine where 100,000 Jews were killed and 300 communities were destroyed.
- 1650 Jews of Tunisia confined to special quarters (Hara).
- 1655-56 Massacres of Jews during the war of Poland against Sweden and Russia.
- 1670 Expulsion from Vienna; Blood libel at Metz, France.
- 1712 Blood libel at Sandomierz, Poland after which the Jews of the town were expelled.
- 1745 Expulsion from Prague.
- 1790-92 Destruction of most of the Jewish communities of Morocco.
- 1791 Pale of Settlement--twenty five provinces of czarist Russia established where Jews were permitted permanent residence. Jews forbidden to settle elsewhere in Russia.
- 1805 Massacre of Jews in Algeria.
- 1819 A series of anti-Jewish riots in Germany that spread to neighboring countries (Denmark, Poland, Latvia, and Bohemias) known as Hep! Hep! Riots, from the derogatory rallying cry against the Jews in Germany.
- 1827 Compulsory military service for the Jews of Russia: Jewish minors under 18 years of age, known as "Cantonists," placed in preparatory military training establishments.

- 1835 Oppressive constitution for the Jews in Russia issued by Czar Nicholas I.
- 1840 Blood libel in Damascus, Syria (The Damascus Affair).
- 1853 Blood libel in Saratov, Russia, bringing renewal of the blood libel throughout Russia.
- 1858 Abduction of a 7 year-old Jewish child, Edgardo Mortara, in Bologna by Catholic conversionists (Mortara Case), an episode which aroused universal indignation in liberal cities.
- 1878 Adolf Stoecker, German anti-Semitic preacher and politician, founds the Social Worker's Party which marks the beginning of the political anti-Semitic movement in Germany.
- 1879 Wilhelm Marr, German agitator, coins the term anti-Semitism.
- 1881-84 Pogroms sweep southern Russia; beginning of mass Jewish emigration.
- 1882 Blood libel in Tiszaezlar, Hungary, which aroused public opinion throughout Europe.
- 1882 A series of temporary laws confirmed by Czar Alexander III of Russia in May (known as the May Laws), which adopted a systematic policy of discrimination with the object of removing the Jews from their economic and public positions.
- 1885 Expulsion of about 10,000 Russian Jews, refugees of 1881-1884 pogroms, from Germany.
- 1891 Blood libel in Zanten, Germany. Expulsion from Moscow, Russia.
- 1894 Alfred Dreyfus' trial in Paris.
- 1899 Houston Stewart Chamberlain, racist and anti-Semitic author, publishes his *Die Grundlagen des 19 Jahrhunderts*, which became a basis of National-Socialist ideology. Blood libel in Bohemia (Hilsner case).
- 1903 Pogrom at Kishinev, Russia.
- 1905 Pogroms in the Ukraine and Bessarabia, perpetuated in 64 towns (most serious in Odessa with over 300 dead and thousands wounded).
- 1905 First Russian public edition of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* appears.
- 1906 Pogroms in Bialystok and Siedlce, Russia.
- 1909-10 Polish boycott against Jews.
- 1911-13 Menahem Mendel Belis blood libel trial at Kiev.
- 1912 Pogroms in Fez, Morocco.
- 1915 Ku Klux Klan, racist organization in the U.S. re-established.
- 1917-21 Pogroms in the Ukraine and Poland. 1) Pogroms by the retreating Red Army from the Ukraine in spring of 1918. 2) Pogroms by the retreating Ukraine army under the command of Simon Petlyura, resulting in the deaths of over 8,000 Jews. 3) Pogroms by the counter-revolutionary "White Army" under the command of General A.I. Denikin in the fall of 1919 in which 1,500 Jews were killed. 4) Pogroms by the "White Army" in Siberia and Mongolia. 5) Pogroms by anti-Soviet bands in the Ukraine in 1920-21 in which thousands of Jews were killed.

- 1919 Pogroms in Hungary: c. 3,000 Jews killed.
- 1920 Adolf Hitler becomes Fuehrer of the National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), later known as National Socialist Party.
- 1920 Henry Ford I begins a series of anti-Semitic articles based on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in his newspaper the "Dearborn Independent".
- 1924 Economic restrictions on Jews in Poland.
- 1925-27 Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* appears.
- 1933 Adolf Hitler appointed chancellor of Germany. Anti-Jewish economic boycott, first concentration camps (Dachau, Esterwegen, Sachsenburg).
- 1935 Nuremberg Laws introduced.
- 1937 Anti-Semitic legislation in Rumania.
- 1937 Discrimination against Jews in Polish universities.
- 1938 After the Anschluss, pogroms in Vienna, anti-Jewish legislation introduced, deportation to camps in Austria and Germany. November 9-10, 1928, *Kristallnacht*, Nazi anti-Jewish outrage in Germany and Austria: Jewish businesses attacked, synagogues burned, Jews sent to concentration camps; racial legislation introduced in Italy; anti-Jewish economic legislation in Hungary.
- 1939 Anti-Jewish laws introduced in Czechoslovakia; Outbreak of World War II, Poland overrun by German Army; pogroms in Poland, beginning of the Holocaust.
- 1940 Nazi Germany introduces gassing.
- 1940 Formation of ghettos in Poland; mass shootings of Jews; Auschwitz camp, later an extermination camp established; Western European Jews under Nazis. Belzec extermination camp established.
- 1941 Germany invades Russia and the Baltic states. Majdanek extermination camp established. Chelmno and Treblinka extermination camps established. Anti-Jewish laws in Slovakia. Pogroms in Rumania. Pogroms and massacres by the Einsatzgruppen and native population in Baltic states and the part of Russia occupied by Germany. Expulsions of Jews from the German Reich to Poland. Beginning of deportation and murder of Jews in France.
- 1941 Severe riots against Jews in Iraq in consequence of Rashid Ali al-Jiliani's coup d'etat. Nazi Germany introduces gassing in extermination camps.
- 1942 Conference in Wannsee, Berlin to carry out the "Final Solution (January 20, 1942). Beginning mass transports of Jews of Belgium and Holland to Auschwitz. Massacres in occupied Russia continue. Death camps of Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka begin to function at full capacity; transports from ghettos to death camps. Sobibor extermination camp established.
- 1943 Germany declared Judenrein. Transports of Jews from all over Europe to death camps. Final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto (May 16, 1943). Annihilation of most of the ghettos. Transport of Italian Jews to death camps.
- 1944 Extermination of Hungarian Jewry.

- 1945 Germany surrenders (May 8, 1945) estimated Jewish victims in the Holocaust 5,820,960.
- 1946 Pogroms at Kielce, Poland where 42 Jews murdered and many wounded.
- 1952 Prague Trials: Murder of Yiddish intellectuals in Russia and many Jews disappear or sent to work camps.
- 1953 Accusation of "Doctor's Plot" in the USSR, cancelled with Stalin's death.
- 1956 Jews of Egypt expelled.
- 1967 Arabic version of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion published in Egypt.
- 1968 Fresh wave of anti-Semitism in Poland; emigration of most of the remaining Jews of Poland.
- 1969 Jews executed in Iraq.
- 1970 Leningrad, and other trials of Soviet Jews who agitate for the right to emigrate.
- 1971 Israeli flag burned by nationalists at a fascist ceremony held in the elitist La Recoleta Catholic ceremony in Buenos Aires.
- 1972 During the Munich Olympics, members of the Black September terrorist group attacked the Israeli headquarters in Olympic village. Eleven athletes killed.
- 1973 Three youths vandalize the old Jewish cemetery of Burgkunststadt, Bavaria toppling almost 600 tombstones. At the trial they maintained they were not politically motivated but had committed the act while drunk.
- 1974 American Jewish Committee--European office reported a sharp upsurge in anti-Semitic harrasment of Italian Jews by anti-Zionist groups.
- 1975 The walls of the Jewish school in Milan, Italy were smeared with Nazi slogans. Nine days later, bombs were thrown against the school gate causing moderate damage.
- United Nations General Assembly approves a resolution equating Zionism with racism.
- 1976 Molotov cocktails were thrown at the gates of the Great Synagogue in Rome during Rosh Hashana services.
- 1977 American Nazi party threatens to march in Skokie, Illinois--a predominantly Jews area with a large proportion of Holocaust survivors. After the march was postponed several times, the Nazis cancelled their plans for Skokie in favor of a rally in Marquette Park (Chicago).
- 1978 Paris office of Betar--a Zionist Youth group--was bombed.
- 1979 Andrew Young, American delegate to the United Nations clandestinely met with a PLO observer at the United Nations. This led to the resignation of Andrew Young, and a decline in Black-Jewish relations as accusaitons of anti-Semitism and racism are exchanged.
- 1981 Synagogue bombing in Antwerp, Belgium. Two are killed, more than 100 injured.

1982

Goldenberg's Restaurant in the Jewish quarter of Paris was attacked killing six and wounding thirty.

Terrorists attack synagogue in Medellin, Columbia. After lining elderly Jews up against a wall, they proceeded to desecrate the temple, burning and scattering Torah scrolls and smearing PLO slogans on the building.

Rome synagogue attacked and bombed. Two year old boy is killed and over 35 injured.

1991

David Duke, former Klansman, attempts to run for the presidency of the United States.

APPENDIX II



**The Jewish Student Online
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Adolf Hitler

(1889-1945)



Founder and leader of the Nazi Party, Reich Chancellor and guiding spirit of the Third Reich from 1933 to 1945, Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria, on 20 April 1889. The son of a fifty-two-year-old Austrian customs official, Alois Schickelgruber Hitler, and his third wife, a young peasant girl, Klara Poelzl, both from the backwoods of lower Austria, the young Hitler was a resentful, discontented child. Moody, lazy, of unstable temperament, he was deeply hostile towards his strict, authoritarian father and strongly attached to his indulgent, hard-working mother, whose death from cancer in December 1908 was a shattering blow to the adolescent Hitler.

After spending four years in the Realschule in Linz, he left school at the age of sixteen with dreams of becoming a painter. In October 1907 the provincial, middle-class boy left home for Vienna, where he was to remain

until 1913 leading a bohemian, vagabond existence. Embittered at his rejection by the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, he was to spend "five years of misery and woe" in Vienna as he later recalled, adopting a view of life which changed very little in the ensuing years, shaped as it was by a pathological hatred of Jews and Marxists, liberalism and the cosmopolitan Habsburg monarchy.

Existing from hand to mouth on occasional odd jobs and the hawking of sketches in low taverns, the young Hitler compensated for the frustrations of a lonely bachelor's life in miserable male hostels by political harangues in cheap cafes to anyone who would listen and indulging in grandiose dreams of a Greater Germany.

In Vienna he acquired his first education in politics by studying the demagogic techniques of the popular Christian-social Mayor, Karl Lueger, and picked up the stereotyped, obsessive anti-Semitism with its brutal, violent sexual connotations and concern with the "purity of blood" that remained with him to the end of his career. From crackpot racial theorists like the defrocked monk, Lanz von Liebenfels, and the Austrian Pan-German leader, Georg von Schoenerer, the young Hitler learned to discern in the "Eternal Jew" the symbol and cause of all chaos, corruption and destruction in culture, politics and the economy. The press, prostitution, syphilis, capitalism, Marxism, democracy and pacifism--all were so many means which "the Jew" exploited in his conspiracy to undermine the German nation and the purity of the creative Aryan race.

In May 1913 Hitler left Vienna for Munich and, when war broke out in August 1914, he joined the Sixteenth Bavarian Infantry Regiment, serving as a despatch runner. Hitler proved an able, courageous soldier, receiving the Iron Cross (First Class) for bravery, but did not rise above the rank of Lance Corporal. Twice wounded, he was badly gassed four weeks before the end of the war and spent three months recuperating in a hospital in Pomerania. Temporarily blinded and driven to impotent rage by the abortive November 1918 revolution in Germany as well as the military defeat, Hitler, once restored, was convinced that fate had chosen him to rescue a humiliated nation from the shackles of the Versailles Treaty, from Bolsheviks and Jews.

Assigned by the Reichswehr in the summer of 1919 to "educational" duties which consisted largely of spying on political parties in the overheated atmosphere of post-revolutionary Munich, Hitler was sent to investigate a small nationalistic group of idealists, the German Workers' Party. On 16 September 1919 he entered the Party (which had approximately forty members), soon changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and had imposed himself as its Chairman by July 1921.

Hitler discovered a powerful talent for oratory as well as giving the new Party its symbol--the swastika--and its greeting "*Heil!*" His hoarse, grating voice, for all the bombastic, humourless, histrionic content of his speeches, dominated audiences by dint of his tone of impassioned conviction and gift for self-dramatization. By November 1921 Hitler was recognized as Fuhrer of a movement which had 3,000 members, and boosted his personal power by organizing strong- arm squads to keep order at his meetings and break up those of his opponents. Out of these squads grew the storm troopers (SA) organized by Captain Ernst Rohm and Hitler's black-shirted personal bodyguard, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS).

Hitler focused his propaganda against the Versailles Treaty, the "November criminals," the Marxists and the visible, internal enemy No. 1, the "Jew," who was responsible for all Germany's domestic problems. In the twenty-five-point programme of the NSDAP announced on 24 February 1920, the exclusion of the Jews from the Volk community, the myth of Aryan race supremacy and extreme nationalism were combined with "socialistic" ideas of profit-sharing and nationalization inspired by ideologues like Gottfried Feder. Hitler's first written utterance on political questions dating from this period emphasized that what he called "the anti-Semitism of reason" must lead "to the systematic combating and elimination of Jewish privileges. Its ultimate goal must implacably be the total removal of the Jews."

By November 1923 Hitler was convinced that the Weimar Republic was on the verge of collapse and, together with General Ludendorff and local nationalist groups, sought to overthrow the Bavarian government in Munich. Bursting into a beer-hall in Munich and firing his pistol into the ceiling, he shouted out that he was heading a new provisional government which would carry through a revolution against "Red Berlin." Hitler and Ludendorff then marched through Munich at the head of 3,000 men, only to be met by police fire which left sixteen dead and brought the attempted putsch to an ignominious end. Hitler was arrested and tried on 26 February 1924, succeeding in turning the tables on his accusers with a confident, propagandist speech which ended with the prophecy: "Pronounce us guilty a thousand times over: the goddess of the eternal court of history will smile and tear to pieces the State Prosecutor's submission and the court's verdict for she acquits us." Sentenced to five years' imprisonment in Landsberg fortress, Hitler was released after only nine months during which he dictated *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) to his loyal follower, Rudolf Hess. Subsequently the "bible" of the Nazi Party, this crude, half-baked hotchpotch of primitive Social Darwinism, racial myth, anti-Semitism and lebensraum fantasy had sold over five million copies by 1939 and been translated into eleven languages.

The failure of the Beer-Hall putsch and his period of imprisonment transformed Hitler from an incompetent adventurer into a shrewd political tactician, who henceforth decided that he would never again confront the gun barrels of army and police until they were under his command. He concluded that the road to power lay not through force alone but through legal subversion of the Weimar Constitution, the building of a mass movement and the combination of parliamentary strength with extra-parliamentary street terror and intimidation. Helped by Goering and Goebbels he began to reassemble his followers and rebuild the movement which had disintegrated in his absence.

In January 1925 the ban on the Nazi Party was removed and Hitler regained permission to speak in public. Outmaneuvering the "socialist" North German wing of the Party under Gregor Strasser, Hitler re-established himself in 1926 as the ultimate arbiter to whom all factions appealed in an ideologically and socially heterogeneous movement. Avoiding rigid, programmatic definitions of National Socialism which would have undermined the charismatic nature of his legitimacy and his claim to absolute leadership, Hitler succeeded in extending his appeal beyond Bavaria and attracting both Right and Left to his movement.

Though the Nazi Party won only twelve seats in the 1928 elections, the

onset of the Great Depression with its devastating effects on the middle classes helped Hitler to win over all those strata in German society who felt their economic existence was threatened. In addition to peasants, artisans, craftsmen, traders, small businessmen, ex-officers, students and declassé intellectuals, the Nazis in 1929 began to win over the big industrialists, nationalist conservatives and army circles. With the backing of the press tycoon, Alfred Hugenberg, Hitler received a tremendous nationwide exposure just as the effects of the world economic crisis hit Germany, producing mass unemployment, social dissolution, fear and indignation. With demagogic virtuosity, Hitler played on national resentments, feelings of revolt and the desire for strong leadership using all the most modern techniques of mass persuasion to present himself as Germany's redeemer and messianic saviour.

In the 1930 elections the Nazi vote jumped dramatically from 810,000 to 6,409,000 (18.3 percent of the total vote) and they received 107 seats in the Reichstag. Prompted by Hjalmar Schacht and Fritz Thyssen, the great industrial magnates began to contribute liberally to the coffers of the NSDAP, reassured by Hitler's performance before the Industrial Club in Dusseldorf on 27 January 1932 that they had nothing to fear from the radicals in the Party. The following month Hitler officially acquired German citizenship and decided to run for the Presidency, receiving 13,418,011 votes in the run-off elections of 10 April 1931 as against 19,359,650 votes for the victorious von Hindenburg, but four times the vote for the communist candidate, Ernst Thaelmann. In the Reichstag elections of July 1932 the Nazis emerged as the largest political party in Germany, obtaining nearly fourteen million votes (37.3 per cent) and 230 seats. Although the NSDAP fell back in November 1932 to eleven million votes (196 seats), Hitler was helped to power by a camarilla of conservative politicians led by Franz von Papen, who persuaded the reluctant von Hindenburg to nominate "the Bohemian corporal" as Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933.

Once in the saddle, Hitler moved with great speed to outmanoeuvre his rivals, virtually ousting the conservatives from any real participation in government by July 1933, abolishing the free trade unions, eliminating the communists, Social Democrats and Jews from any role in political life and sweeping opponents into concentration camps. The Reichstag fire of 27 February 1933 had provided him with the perfect pretext to begin consolidating the foundations of a totalitarian one-party State, and special "enabling laws" were ramrodded through the Reichstag to legalize the regime's intimidatory tactics.

With support from the nationalists, Hitler gained a majority at the last "democratic" elections held in Germany on 5 March 1933 and with cynical skill he used the whole gamut of persuasion, propaganda, terror and intimidation to secure his hold on power. The seductive notions of "National Awakening" and a "Legal Revolution" helped paralyse potential opposition and disguise the reality of autocratic power behind a facade of traditional institutions.

The destruction of the radical SA leadership under Ernst Rohm in the Blood Purge of June 1934 confirmed Hitler as undisputed dictator of the Third Reich and by the beginning of August, when he united the positions of Fuhrer and Chancellor on the death of von Hindenburg, he had all the powers of State in his hands. Avoiding any institutionalization of authority

and status which could challenge his own undisputed position as supreme arbiter, Hitler allowed subordinates like Himmler, Goering and Goebbels to mark out their own domains of arbitrary power while multiplying and duplicating offices to a bewildering degree.

During the next four years Hitler enjoyed a dazzling string of domestic and international successes, outwitting rival political leaders abroad just as he had defeated his opposition at home. In 1935 he abandoned the Versailles Treaty and began to build up the army by conscripting five times its permitted number. He persuaded Great Britain to allow an increase in the naval building programme and in March 1936 he occupied the demilitarized Rhineland without meeting opposition. He began building up the Luftwaffe and supplied military aid to Francoist forces in Spain, which brought about the Spanish fascist victory in 1939.

The German rearmament programme led to full employment and an unrestrained expansion of production, which reinforced by his foreign policy successes--the Rome-Berlin pact of 1936, the Anschluss with Austria and the "liberation" of the Sudeten Germans in 1938--brought Hitler to the zenith of his popularity. In February 1938 he dismissed sixteen senior generals and took personal command of the armed forces, thus ensuring that he would be able to implement his aggressive designs.

Hitler's saber-rattling tactics bludgeoned the British and French into the humiliating Munich agreement of 1938 and the eventual dismantlement of the Czechoslovakian State in March 1939. The concentration camps, the Nuremberg racial laws against the Jews, the persecution of the churches and political dissidents were forgotten by many Germans in the euphoria of Hitler's territorial expansion and bloodless victories. The next designated target for Hitler's ambitions was Poland (her independence guaranteed by Britain and France) and, to avoid a two-front war, the Nazi dictator signed a pact of friendship and non-aggression with Soviet Russia. On 1 September 1939 German armies invaded Poland and henceforth his main energies were devoted to the conduct of a war he had unleashed to dominate Europe and secure Germany's "living space."

The first phase of World War II was dominated by German Blitzkrieg tactics: sudden shock attacks against airfields, communications, military installations, using fast mobile armor and infantry to follow up on the first wave of bomber and fighter aircraft. Poland was overrun in less than one month, Denmark and Norway in two months, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg and France in six weeks. After the fall of France in June 1940 only Great Britain stood firm.

The Battle of Britain, in which the Royal Air Force prevented the Luftwaffe from securing aerial control over the English Channel, was Hitler's first setback, causing the planned invasion of the British Isles to be postponed. Hitler turned to the Balkans and North Africa where his Italian allies had suffered defeats, his armies rapidly overrunning Greece, Yugoslavia, the island of Crete and driving the British from Cyrenaica.

The crucial decision of his career, the invasion of Soviet Russia on 22 June 1941, was rationalized by the idea that its destruction would prevent Great Britain from continuing the war with any prospect of success. He was convinced that once he kicked the door in, as he told Jodl (q.v.), "the whole

rotten edifice [of communist rule] will come tumbling down" and the campaign would be over in six weeks. The war against Russia was to be an anti-Bolshevik crusade, a war of annihilation in which the fate of European Jewry would finally be sealed. At the end of January 1939 Hitler had prophesied that "if the international financial Jewry within and outside Europe should succeed once more in dragging the nations into a war, the result will be, not the Bolshevization of the world and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

As the war widened -- the United States by the end of 1941 had entered the struggle against the Axis powers --- Hitler identified the totality of Germany's enemies with "international Jewry," who supposedly stood behind the British-American-Soviet alliance. The policy of forced emigration had manifestly failed to remove the Jews from Germany's expanded *lebensraum*, increasing their numbers under German rule as the Wehrmacht moved East.

The widening of the conflict into a world war by the end of 1941, the refusal of the British to accept Germany's right to continental European hegemony (which Hitler attributed to "Jewish" influence) and to agree to his "peace" terms, the racial-ideological nature of the assault on Soviet Russia, finally drove Hitler to implement the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" which had been under consideration since 1939. The measures already taken in those regions of Poland annexed to the Reich against Jews (and Poles) indicated the genocidal implications of Nazi-style "Germanization" policies. The invasion of Soviet Russia was to set the seal on Hitler's notion of territorial conquest in the East, which was inextricably linked with annihilating the 'biological roots of Bolshevism' and hence with the liquidation of all Jews under German rule.

At first the German armies carried all before them, overrunning vast territories, overwhelming the Red Army, encircling Leningrad and reaching within striking distance of Moscow. Within a few months of the invasion Hitler's armies had extended the Third Reich from the Atlantic to the Caucasus, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. But the Soviet Union did not collapse as expected and Hitler, instead of concentrating his attack on Moscow, ordered a pincer movement around Kiev to seize the Ukraine, increasingly procrastinating and changing his mind about objectives. Underestimating the depth of military reserves on which the Russians could call, the caliber of their generals and the resilient, fighting spirit of the Russian people (whom he dismissed as inferior peasants), Hitler prematurely proclaimed in October 1941 that the Soviet Union had been "struck down and would never rise again." In reality he had overlooked the pitiless Russian winter to which his own troops were now condemned and which forced the Wehrmacht to abandon the highly mobile warfare which had previously brought such spectacular successes.

The disaster before Moscow in December 1941 led him to dismiss his Commander-in-Chief von Brauchitsch, and many other key commanders who sought permission for tactical withdrawals, including Guderian, Bock, Hoepner, von Rundstedt and Leeb, found themselves cashiered. Hitler now assumed personal control of all military operations, refusing to listen to advice, disregarding unpalatable facts and rejecting everything that did not fit into his preconceived picture of reality. His neglect of the Mediterranean theatre and the Middle East, the failure of the Italians, the entry of the United States into the war, and above all the stubborn determination of the

Russians, pushed Hitler on to the defensive. From the winter of 1941 the writing was on the wall but Hitler refused to countenance military defeat, believing that implacable will and the rigid refusal to abandon positions could make up for inferior resources and the lack of a sound overall strategy.

Convinced that his own General Staff was weak and indecisive, if not openly treacherous, Hitler became more prone to outbursts of blind, hysterical fury towards his generals, when he did not retreat into bouts of misanthropic brooding. His health, too, deteriorated under the impact of the drugs prescribed by his quack physician, Dr. Theodor Morell. Hitler's personal decline, symbolized by his increasingly rare public appearances and his self-enforced isolation in the "Wolf's Lair," his headquarters buried deep in the East Prussian forests, coincided with the visible signs of the coming German defeat which became apparent in mid-1942.

Rommel's defeat at El Alamein and the subsequent loss of North Africa to the Anglo-American forces were overshadowed by the disaster at Stalingrad where General von Paulus's Sixth Army was cut off and surrendered to the Russians in January 1943. In July 1943 the Allies captured Sicily and Mussolini's regime collapsed in Italy. In September the Italians signed an armistice and the Allies landed at Salerno, reaching Naples on 1 October and taking Rome on 4 June 1944. The Allied invasion of Normandy followed on 6 June 1944 and soon a million Allied troops were driving the German armies eastwards, while from the opposite direction the Soviet forces advanced relentlessly on the Reich. The total mobilization of the German war economy under Albert Speer and the energetic propaganda efforts of Joseph Goebbels to rouse the fighting spirit of the German people were impotent to change the fact that the Third Reich lacked the resources equal to a struggle against the world alliance which Hitler himself had provoked.

Allied bombing began to have a telling effect on German industrial production and to undermine the morale of the population. The generals, frustrated by Hitler's total refusal to trust them in the field and recognizing the inevitability of defeat, planned, together with the small anti-Nazi Resistance inside the Reich, to assassinate the Fuhrer on 20 July 1944, hoping to pave the way for a negotiated peace with the Allies that would save Germany from destruction. The plot failed and Hitler took implacable vengeance on the conspirators, watching with satisfaction a film of the grisly executions carried out on his orders.

As disaster came closer, Hitler buried himself in the unreal world of the Fuhrerbunker in Berlin, clutching at fantastic hopes that his "secret weapons," the V-1 and V-2 rockets, would yet turn the tide of war. He gestured wildly over maps, planned and directed attacks with non-existent armies and indulged in endless, night-long monologues which reflected his growing senility, misanthropy and contempt for the "cowardly failure" of the German people.

As the Red Army approached Berlin and the Anglo-Americans reached the Elbe, on 19 March 1945 Hitler ordered the destruction of what remained of German industry, communications and transport systems. He was resolved that, if he did not survive, Germany too should be destroyed. The same ruthless nihilism and passion for destruction which had led to the extermination of six million Jews in death camps, to the biological

"cleansing" of the sub-human Slavs and other subject peoples in the New Order, was finally turned on his own people.

On 29 April 1945 he married his mistress Eva Braun and dictated his final political testament, concluding with the same monotonous, obsessive fixation that had guided his career from the beginning: "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry."

The following day Hitler committed suicide, shooting himself through the mouth with a pistol. His body was carried into the garden of the Reich Chancellery by aides, covered with petrol and burned along with that of Eva Braun. This final, macabre act of self-destruction appropriately symbolized the career of a political leader whose main legacy to Europe was the ruin of its civilization and the senseless sacrifice of human life for the sake of power and his own commitment to the bestial nonsense of National Socialist race mythology. With his death nothing was left of the "Greater Germanic Reich," of the tyrannical power structure and ideological system which had devastated Europe during the twelve years of his totalitarian rule.

Source: Wistrich, Robert S. *Who's Who in Nazi Germany*, Routledge, 1997. USHMM photo.

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The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry. Leni Yahil.
Oxford University Press. New York. Oxford, 1990.

Hitler Implements Twentieth-Century Anti-Semitism

43

to fashion his basic outlook. For a long while Rosenberg was regarded as the chief expert on Russian affairs, and as the editor of *VB* he had an enormous impact on public opinion. But the more that Nazi policy took shape, especially after the abortive 1923 putsch, the more his influence declined.

The Swedish-Jewish historian Hugo Valentin has summed up the character of German anti-Semitism in the years after World War I:

Anti-Semitism, which now struck the German people as a means of discharging aggression, was no longer the same hatred of Jews as in days past. . . . Anti-Semitism was the great store of heterogeneous aggressions and heterogeneous interests. The anti-Jewish mythology had a magnetic effect on the reactionaries, who despised the Weimar Republic; on the unemployed intellectuals; on the classes that had been worst hit by inflation and industrialization, namely, the middle class and the farmers; and on the conservatives, who were full of contempt for secularization, the disintegration of ethics, and modernization in art and literature.²⁷

Hitler

The Shaping of His Personality

Actually the reasons for anti-Semitism should be sought first and foremost not among the objects of hatred, to whom—contrary to fact and logic—the anti-Semite has ascribed practically everything he wished to find, but among the haters.²⁸

If this statement by Hugo Valentin is applicable to anyone, it is Adolf Hitler. Ever since his debut on the stage of history at the beginning of the 1920s, attempts have been made to analyze his personality, fathom the secret of his success, and elucidate his downfall. But no less difficult than analyzing the führer's personality is explaining the fact that masses of people in Germany fell under the spell of his demagoguery and the propaganda of the fascistic National Socialist movement that he inspired and led. Notwithstanding all the political, economic, social, and psychological explications—including the considerable research devoted after World War II to Germany's romantic, reactionary, and religious heritage—it is impossible to understand the success of National Socialism, its campaign of conquest, and the harrowing events of the war without Hitler as the focal figure and prime mover. Among the thirty-eight million people who died because of his tyrannical rule and unchecked ambitions were six million Jews—two-thirds of European Jewry. Hitler's campaign to annihilate the Jews was not a sudden whim. From the inception of his political career, the struggle against the Jews had been a prominent component of his Weltanschauung and political method. In his conversations with Rauschnig, he once defined it as "a merciless struggle for world domination." Anti-Semitism was for Hitler both an ideological principal and a political and propaganda tactic that he used in a calculated manner. When asked by Rauschnig if he believed it was necessary to destroy the Jew, Hitler demurred, "We should have then to invent him. It is essential to have a tangible enemy, not merely an abstract one."²⁹ Later he identified the Jew with all of his most hated enemies—the Marxists, the Russians, even the Western leaders who made war on

him. Moreover, his entire historical and political outlook was based on his perception of the Jews as they were depicted in the *Protocols*. As the biographer Joachim C. Fest put it, "Certainly the thesis that the Jews were striving for world domination made good propaganda; but . . . he really believed this thesis, saw it as the key to all sorts of phenomena. He clung more and more to this 'redeeming formula,' convinced that through it he understood the nature of the great crisis of the age that he alone could cure."³⁰

The first formulation of Hitler's anti-Semitic outlook is found in a letter he wrote in 1919:

Antisemitism as a political movement may not and cannot be moulded by emotional factors but only by recognition of facts. To begin with, the Jews are unquestionably a race, not a religious community. . . . Through inbreeding for thousands of years, often in very small circles, the Jew has been able to preserve his race and his racial characteristics much more successfully than most of the numerous people among whom he lives. As a result we have living in our midst a non-German, alien race, unwilling and indeed unable to shed its racial characteristics. . . .

Everything that makes the people strive for greater things, be it religion, socialism, or democracy, merely serves the Jew as a means to the satisfaction of his greed and thirst for power. The result of his works is racial tuberculosis of the nation. . . .

Rational antisemitism, by contrast [to emotional antisemitism] must lead to a systematic and legal struggle against, and eradication of, what privileges the Jews enjoy over other foreigners living among us (Alien Laws). Its final objective, however, must be the total removal of all Jews from our midst.³¹

Hitler fused all the thoughts, impulses, and influences that anti-Semitism ascribed to the Jew into a comprehensive ideology on which he attempted to base not only his movement but also his personal career. He denied the Jews the designation of "human beings," for he believed they were created not in God's image but in Satan's, "The Jew is the creature of another god, the anti-man. . . . He is a creature outside nature and alien to nature."³²

More than twenty years after writing this letter, on February 22, 1942, in one of his dinner-table monologues, Hitler reiterated the pronouncement that the Jew was the tuberculosis germ of humankind and compared his war against the Jews to the work of Louis Pasteur and Heinrich Koch against bacteria in the previous century. Diseases were caused by the Jewish germ, he continued, but "We shall be cured if we dispose of the Jew. . . . The cause of those diseases is the racial germ that corrupts the mixture of the blood."³³ This statement was made a month after the Wannsee Conference, by which time the extermination program was already in progress in Eastern Europe and the comprehensive plan for the "Final Solution" had already been completed. It can be assumed that Hitler's companions at that dinner knew that this was not idle talk but rather his explanation and justification of the extermination.

How did Hitler arrive at this anti-Semitic approach? He was born in the town of Braunau, Austria, on April 20, 1889, and his path from the provincial city of Linz—where he spent his youth—to Vienna has been described many times.³⁴ At first these accounts were based primarily on Hitler's own description of his devel-

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opment in his autobiographical-ideological work *Mein Kampf*. Combining his views and political aspirations with this narration of his life was characteristic of the way in which he chose to present himself and his mission. Napoleon was but a human being, Hitler once said, not a "world event."³⁵ Today it is clear that he fabricated and distorted facts in order to build an image that would be attractive to his followers and the millions of others he aspired to lead.

Failing to advance at school, Hitler abandoned his studies and lived aimlessly for a while in his mother's home (his father, a customs officer, had died by then). At the age of eighteen he went to Vienna to study architecture, but as his drawing ability proved insufficient, he failed to win a place at the Academy of Art. From then on he avoided any course that involved steady work and provided a fixed income; he lived a rather abstemious life, steeped in his dreams of grandeur for the future. Contrary to what he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, initially he did not suffer want and even came into a small inheritance after his mother's death at the end of 1907. Later, he lived on the fringe of society, lodging in a "men's hostel" (1910) where homeless and usually unskilled transients found shelter. Through the help of a partner, he was able to sell postcards and miniature pictures he had drawn, but eventually they fell out over money. In May 1913 Hitler moved to Munich, a change of venue designed to help him evade the draft (which he was certainly not interested in having revealed).³⁶ The Austrian police traced him to Munich and forced him to return to Linz for a clarification of the matter, but he managed to have himself classified as unfit for military service. (In 1938 he attempted to have the papers relating to this episode destroyed but failed to locate them.³⁷) Yet when World War I broke out, he felt quite differently about the matter, immediately—even enthusiastically—volunteering for the German army. The war gave him a sense of purpose, cured his restlessness, and saved him from his inability to provide direction to his life.

From his youth onward Hitler had tried to build a life according to his own conception of things; thus he had had difficulty adjusting to existing frameworks and a steady job. This was also probably the reason for his failure in school. His interest in politics developed alongside his artistic ambitions, which were nurtured by a love for music, especially for operas—above all those of Wagner.³⁸ Reading was also one of his avid pastimes. But he read haphazardly, storing in his excellent memory data and impressions that were consistent with his beliefs and dreams. Hitler expanded on his method of reading in *Mein Kampf*.³⁹ He fed his imagination with stories of fantasy and adventure, with which German literature was generously endowed. Together with literature and art he also imbibed the prevailing prejudices of the day; Wagner's music conveyed to him the Aryan ideal and the composer's mythical-heroic conception of life and death. After the death of his deeply loved mother, Hitler at the age of twenty remained alone in Vienna, increasingly withdrawing into the world of his imagination.⁴⁰

We can believe his statement that his Viennese period was a time of learning. Observing the political and social struggles going on around him, Hitler appreciated the potentially explosive situation inherent in the German rule of the Hapsburg Empire because of its diverse nationalities: Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Serbs, Croats, and Italians. He was attracted to the pan-German ideology of the nation-

rageous soldier who earned a number of decorations. These included one of the German army's highest medals—the Iron Cross, First Class—which was usually only awarded to officers. Hitler related the circumstances in which he earned his other medals, but he never went into the background of this one, which at one point led to rumors that he had not received it rightfully or honestly. However, it appears that there was another reason for his silence on the subject: he wished to conceal the fact that the decoration had been awarded to him on the recommendation of the regiment's adjutant, who was a Jew. In any event he was never promoted any higher than corporal and apparently never wished to be. Toward the end of the war he was wounded in a gas attack that caused him temporary blindness, and this experience remained with him as a profound trauma.

Early Political Career

News of the armistice, the kaiser's abdication, and the founding of a republic found Hitler in the hospital recuperating from the effects of the gas attack. The tidings were a great shock to him—this was not the Germany for which he had gone to war—and he later recalled that on hearing the news he wept.⁴³ After being released from the hospital, he returned to Munich, remained in the army, and began to associate with the many soldiers in the Bavarian army—officers and enlisted men alike—who were opposed to the new regime. The Division of Information and Intelligence systematically worked to undermine the socialist regime that had been established in Bavaria; in May 1919 the socialist government was toppled with the aid of the Freikorps, paramilitary units dedicated to fighting against socialism in general and communism in particular. Hitler underwent a training course in political science at the University of Munich and was assigned to the staff of army lecturers whose task was to monitor the views of the soldiers who had been POWs and to indoctrinate them with nationalistic and anti-Marxist ideas. Thus Hitler began to hone the skill that was later to become his greatest political asset: oratory. Even then he often spoke of the threat that the Jews posed to the German people. It was also during this period, for example, that he wrote the letter quoted earlier. A few days afterward, on September 12, 1919, on orders from his commander, he attended the assembly of a small political party calling itself the German Workers Party (Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, or DAP) and participated in a debate. The party's members were so impressed by his speaking ability that they later tried to recruit him into their ranks. Hitler joined this small group as Member Number 555 and soon began to prepare the party for the great role he envisioned for it: a revolutionary party that would wrest unto itself the rule of Germany.

At first the party grew slowly, the most conspicuous element to join being active and demobilized soldiers referred to the new nationalist nucleus mainly by Major Ernst Röhm of the Division of Information and Intelligence. Before long, however, Hitler embarked on a systematic effort to bring the party to the public's attention. Meetings were organized in the beer cellars of Munich, demonstrations were held, and Hitler did not refrain from deliberately disturbing the peace and disrupting the public in order to attract attention. Within half a year he found

himself speaking at a rally before two thousand people. He was not yet listed as the main speaker, but on that day, February 24, 1920, he introduced the new party's platform, and it is assumed that he also played a part in framing it.⁴⁴ The platform defined the aims of the National Socialist movement in twenty-five points that were divided among nationalist and anti-Semitic principles and social objectives (the Nazis made no attempt to realize these once they were in power). The thinking behind it was, for the most part, borrowed from systems and doctrines that had evolved during the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, it promised to satisfy the demands of most of the disaffected citizens of Germany and stressed its positive attitude to Christianity without committing itself to any specific church. But between the lines one could discern its far-reaching political goals and even a call for totalitarian rule. A week after the assembly at which the program was announced, the party changed its name and was known thereafter as the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, or NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). The new appellation was chosen in collaboration with similar organizations that had come into being prior to the war in the Sudeten district of Czechoslovakia (then still part of the Hapsburg Empire) as well as other groups in Germany and Austria.⁴⁵

A few days later an insurrection broke out in Berlin. Mounted by an extreme right-wing group that was led by Max Kapp—thus subsequently known as the Kapp putsch—it was swiftly quelled by the army. But not before Hitler reached Berlin to follow the events at close hand. On returning to Munich he decided to devote his life to politics. From his demobilization on April 1, 1920, he lived as a politician, evidently receiving financial support from circles in Bavaria that were interested in reinforcing the opposition to the German Reich's central Social Democratic regime. His supporters included distinguished members of society; it was Dietrich Eckart who gained Hitler access to the salons of the aristocracy and financiers, schooling him in the etiquette necessary to circulate in this society. Hitler called attention to himself by both his long silences and his eruptions into extemporaneous discourse, and he succeeded in exciting his audiences—particularly its female members—in this circle as well.

Hitler regarded propaganda as the primary instrument for advancing his political aims and disseminating his ideas among the masses. His chief propaganda tool was the oration, and oratory skill may have been the one thing he learned thoroughly and systematically.⁴⁶ Unquestionably, he had a natural talent as a speaker, and his instincts led him to focus on issues that perturbed his listeners, promising them what they wanted to hear. That was how he earned their confidence. But beyond following his instincts, he planned his appearances carefully: coordinating appropriate gestures, studying the halls in which he was scheduled to appear, testing the acoustics, and so on. At the same time he took pains to give his orations the ceremonial character of a show in which every detail was worked out in advance, and the military and ritual aspects of his appearances became increasingly pronounced and sophisticated.

Hitler himself noted the power of "mass suggestion" and its "spellbinding effect" in *Mein Kampf*, "The will, the longing, and likewise the power of thousands are accumulated in every individual. The man who enters such a meet-

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ing doubting and wavering leaves it inwardly reinforced; he has become a link in the community."⁴⁷ His rapport with the masses has often been described in erotic terms; he himself referred to the masses as a woman, with his objective being to overpower them and eradicate their independent thought and will. He viewed the rally as an arena of struggle from which he must emerge the victor. While speaking at these assemblies, he abandoned all restraint and worked himself into a state of ecstasy that usually left him drained. Hitler needed the oration and the uninhibited devotion of the masses no less than they were in need of the assurance and inner reinforcement that he provided them. Perhaps oration was the means through which he achieved the sense of power that was the basic aspiration of his being. As the biographer Joachim Fest has noted:

Anyone who thought the entire secret of Hitler's success as an orator lay in [his] use of speech as a sexual surrogate would be making a serious mistake. Rather, once again it was the curious coupling of delirium and rationality that characterized his oratory. Gesticulating in the glare of spotlights, pale, his voice hoarse as he hurled charges, tirades, and outbursts of hatred, he remained always the alert master of his emotions. For all his seeming abandon, he never lost control. We are dealing here with the same ambiguity that governed his entire behavior and was one of the basic facts of his character.⁴⁸

Although Hitler regarded the spoken word as his main means of influence, he also worked on developing symbols and other means of captivating the masses. Though he was not the one who discovered the swastika, as he claimed (it had earlier been used by other nationalist groups), he made it the symbol of his party. Similarly, he copied the use of the color red on the flag from the Socialists but went beyond it by posting huge red placards to announce his rallies. In December 1921, with the generous aid of donors, he purchased *VB* and turned it into the party's main organ. But he also regarded terror as a vital means of gaining attention. As early as the summer of 1921, Hitler began organizing a violent unit that was initially called a defense force and was officially introduced under the guise of the Division for Propaganda and Sports but soon received the name *Sturmabteilung*, or SA (storm troopers). The members of the paramilitary organizations were recruited to this militia, as were people who had earlier been active in perpetrating the right-wing terror that spread through Bavaria.

Hitler evidently acquired some of his knowledge of mass psychology from Chamberlain, who had noted that mass rallies blunt the individual's judgment and intensify his zeal and that the effect is similar to hypnosis, which is why there is special importance to the speeches of people of brutal strength, who win out over sharper and subtler minds.⁴⁹

The Abortive Putsch

The tension in Germany, meanwhile, was rising as a result of rampant inflation, unemployment, and political unrest. The friction between the central government in Berlin and the reactionary and separatist forces in Bavaria soared. In the belief that he could exploit the situation to his movement's advantage, Hitler tried to

incite an armed insurrection on May 1, 1923. Although he failed and was forced to retire from the political arena for a few months, the Bavarian authorities preferred not to place him on trial. This hiatus was spent in a house placed at his disposal in the alpine resort of Berchtesgaden. By the end of that summer, it appeared that new conditions had emerged for collaboration between the army and the National Socialist party. Having acquired the support of General Erich Ludendorff together with a number of other nationalists, Hitler established a militant alliance that set as its goal a revolution to dissolve the Weimar Republic and abrogate the Versailles treaty. He expected to gain backing for his aims among the ruling circles in Bavaria and thus began making preparations for a putsch to be executed on the anniversary of the Second Reich's downfall, November 9, 1923. Following Mussolini's example, he dreamed not only of wresting power in the Bavarian capital of Munich but of marching on Berlin. The putsch was immediately quashed by the army, which failed to collaborate as Hitler had expected. The shots fired at the insurrectionist marchers killed a number of Hitler's supporters, including the man with whom he was walking arm in arm. Hitler himself was slightly wounded and fled the scene.

Surprisingly, however, the movement recovered quickly, and Hitler succeeded in turning his trial into a political spectacle that spread his fame throughout Germany. In the course of the proceedings, he publicly declared his intention to topple the regime but rejected the charge that this was an act of treason. Sentenced to five years' imprisonment, he was released after nine months, and the efforts of the police and the state prosecutor to have him deported proved fruitless.

Hitler's prison term more closely resembled house arrest in the company of his followers than internment behind bars. He used it for two ends: to draw the necessary conclusions from the abortive putsch and to plan his next move. He also started writing *Mein Kampf* during this period. Hitler's conclusions can be summed up in three points: (1) the rule of Germany must be attained by legal means, not by a violent coup; (2) rule cannot be wrested against the will of the army; and (3) it will be necessary to exacerbate the unrest in the country and employ methods appropriate to a civil war without violating the first two principles. The Nazis conducted their struggle along these lines in the years to come, which were the first years of stability for the Weimar Republic. From a propaganda and organizational standpoint, they laid the foundations that enabled them to begin their countdown toward assuming power once the grave economic crisis set in at the end of the 1920s.

Forging an Ideology

Considering their circumstances, Hitler and his movement ascribed supreme importance to the task of fashioning an ideology. In subsequent years he would repeatedly stress that *Weltanschauung* was even more important than military strength, political influence, or organizational ability, and the focus of his own outlook was racial anti-Semitism.

A vehicle for conveying this *Weltanschauung*, *Mein Kampf* is a poorly organized work, full of repetition and written in an unpolished and often abstruse

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style. Only occasionally does the writing move along on a wave of Hitlerite rhetoric; rarely does it develop a subject systematically. Initially, the book did not sell well, and most readers found it difficult to take its superficial and distorted views, demagoguery, and anti-Semitic threats seriously. It was only after World War II that people began to analyze the book's contents and found that it contained almost everything that Hitler ultimately brought to pass as head of the Third Reich. *Mein Kampf* addressed itself to many issues: Germany's standing after World War I; political strategy and Germany's political objectives on both the domestic and foreign fronts; ways of influencing the masses (the issue of propaganda was one of the few developed systematically); and, of course, Hitler's personal career and the principles that directed his actions. Again and again, the subject of the Jews came up, their destructive influence being depicted as the primary obstacle to redressing Germany's condition, ensuring its recuperation, and returning the country to the standing it deserved in the world. The book gave expression to the total fusion of Hitler's personal ambitions and what he understood as Germany's fate. Only with Hitler at its head, *Mein Kampf* implied, would Germany fulfill its destiny.

Hitler roundly condemned the two main classes in German society—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—accusing the middle class of treason and the working class of the crime of Marxism. But essentially he saw them both as victims of the Jew. His depiction of the Jews reflects all the traits ascribed to them by the various anti-Semitic doctrines, and his explanation of their behavior runs in the spirit of the *Protocols*. In *Mein Kampf*, however, this “historical” exegesis and “political” analysis were joined by a new element: the denunciation of the Jew for his alleged sexual tendencies and his aspiration to corrupt pure Aryan blood through sexual relations. “For hours the black-haired Jew-boy, diabolic joy in his face, waits in ambush for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, and thus robs her from her people. With the aid of all means he tries to ruin the racial foundations of the people to be enslaved . . . a racially pure people, conscious of its blood, can never be enslaved by the Jew.”⁵⁰

Hitler reiterated here the contention so popular among the anti-Semites that the Jews were responsible for the outbreak of World War I, for Germany's defeat, and for the fall of the Wilhelmine government. To his statements on World War I Hitler added expressions of slander and hatred against the Jews that, in light of his subsequent actions during World War II, foreshadowed a real threat. Thus he deplored the fact that the national frenzy inspired by the outbreak of World War I was not used to do away with “the whole fraudulent brotherhood of Jewish poisoners of the people.” Hitler continued, “It [is] the duty of a prudent government . . . to mercilessly root out [*ausrotten*] the instigators against this nationality. If the best were killed on the front, then one could at least destroy the vermin at home.”⁵¹ And toward the end of *Mein Kampf*, he reiterated this approach in an even more explicit form:

If at the beginning of the war and during the war, twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebraic corruptors of the nation had been subjected to poison gas, such as had to be endured in the field by hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers of all classes and professions, then the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been

in vain. On the contrary; twelve thousand scoundrels, opportunely eliminated, and perhaps a million orderly, worthwhile Germans had been saved for the future. But it is also part of the bourgeois "statecraft" to deliver millions to a bloody end on the battlefield without blinking an eyelash while regarding ten or twelve thousand traitors, tricksters, users and swindlers as a priceless national shrine and hence publicly to proclaim their inviolability. Indeed, one cannot tell whether this bourgeois world is richer in blockheadedness, feebleness, and cowardice, or through dissipated principles. It is truly a class doomed by Fate to decline but which, unfortunately, is dragging the whole nation along with it into the abyss.⁵²

When the time came, however, Hitler was very adept at using the bourgeoisie to ascend to power. To this end he used terror, political tactics, and propaganda based on the racist ideology. Undermining the foundations of the German state, he would eventually drag it to the brink of the abyss.

The Creation

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On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag was set on fire. This was the beginning of the end for the Weimar Republic. Hitler, who had been appointed Chancellor in January 1933, used this event to gain emergency powers. He quickly moved to suppress opposition and consolidate his power. The Reichstag Fire Decree, issued on February 28, suspended civil liberties and allowed the government to arrest and detain without trial anyone suspected of involvement in the fire. This was followed by the Enabling Act of March 23, which gave Hitler the authority to enact laws without the consent of the Reichstag. By the end of the year, Hitler had established a dictatorship. The Reichstag was dissolved, and the Weimar Republic was replaced by the Third Reich. Hitler's rise to power was a result of a combination of factors, including economic crisis, political instability, and the support of the German people. He was able to exploit the fears and desires of the German people and to present himself as the only leader who could bring stability and prosperity to the country. His policies of economic recovery and national revival were popular, and he was able to gain the support of the German people. He was able to suppress opposition and to establish a dictatorship. The Reichstag was dissolved, and the Weimar Republic was replaced by the Third Reich. Hitler's rise to power was a result of a combination of factors, including economic crisis, political instability, and the support of the German people. He was able to exploit the fears and desires of the German people and to present himself as the only leader who could bring stability and prosperity to the country. His policies of economic recovery and national revival were popular, and he was able to gain the support of the German people. He was able to suppress opposition and to establish a dictatorship. The Reichstag was dissolved, and the Weimar Republic was replaced by the Third Reich.

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In 1939, on the outbreak of the war, Hitler ordered the recruitment of SS-Verfügungstruppen, special duty troops, under Himmler's exclusive command. In 1940 the Verfügungstruppen units were merged with the Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler (the Nazi Praetorian Guards, commanded by Sepp Dietrich) and other units to form the Waffen-SS. Organized into standard divisions, the Waffen-SS constituted the core of an independent army under Himmler's personal command.³⁹

The Nazi Mentality

Any survey of National Socialism, no matter how brief, raises complex questions about the Nazis, and about the Germans in general.⁴⁰ In light of the wartime atrocities, the Nazis might seem to be a band of sadists who achieved almost sexual pleasure from seeing their victims tormented. Careful study appears to show the opposite. With the possible exception of the Sturmabteilungen (SA), many of whose members were professional ruffians, most of the Nazis were of lower-middle-class origin. Few were unusual before their nazification and almost none had previous police records. Indeed, recent studies portray them as bland, banal, ordinary, lacking strong personalities, and — to a great extent — failures in "normal" life.⁴¹

Nazism was, nevertheless, able to call upon a deep-seated core of violence that turned ordinary middle-class citizens into fanatical murderers. Although no single explanation is presently available to completely explain why this was so, psychological studies done during the 1960s — generally associated with Theodore Adorno's hypothesis about the existence of an "authoritarian personality" — offer some applicable generalizations. In particular, Adorno suggested that some traits, identified in "normal" times as mild eccentricities, could lead to extreme violence in "abnormal" circumstances. Among other things, the list included: submissiveness to authority, rigid adherence

to conventional behavior, stereotyping of outsiders, noncreativity, superstition, cynicism, and an unusual concern with "manliness" and sexuality.⁴²

Yet the banal and ordinary citizens were not the only ones attracted to Nazism; the educated elite also felt a deep attraction to Nazi doctrine. Long a seedbed for German arch-conservatism and hypernationalist agitation, by 1933 Germany's universities had adopted the nineteenth-century critics' views regarding the past, present, and future almost entirely.⁴³ As a result, lawyers, physicians, historians, educators, and scientists all lent a hand to Hitler's grand undertaking. A case in point was Gerhard Kittel. Born in September 1889, he was the son of Rudolf Kittel, a biblical scholar and author of *Biblia Hebraica*. Gerhard Kittel, a scholar in his own right, author of *Die Probleme des Palestiner Spätjudentums*, was professor of theology at the University of Tübingen. Before the advent of the Thousand-Year Reich, he frequently associated with Jewish scholars of the day. In 1933, after the *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power), Kittel wrote a short book, *Die Judenfrage* (The Jewish Question), in which he showed that the emancipation had been an error and ought to be undone. Later, during the period of extermination, Kittel used his knowledge of Judaism to justify the destruction of European Jewry.⁴⁴

Kittel, of course, was not an exception. "Hitler's professors," some of them the best in their respective fields, were able to come up with precedents that gave legal sanction to the most brutal measures that any criminal state has ever undertaken.⁴⁵

One example may suffice: Historian Walter Frank used his considerable talents to expose "international Jewry" on every possible occasion. Not surprisingly, Frank wrote his doctoral dissertation (1927) on the court chaplain and well-known antisemite, Adolf Stöcker.⁴⁶ On October 19, 1935, Frank was tapped by the NSDAP to create a new research institute, the Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands (State Institute for the History of the New Germany). Among his patrons — members and honorary members of

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History of The Holocaust: A Handbook & Dictionary - Abraham J. Edelheit & Herschel Edelheit. Westview Press - Boulder. 1994

the institute — were many of the most famous historians and academicians of contemporary Germany.⁴⁷

The Nazi regime also co-opted medical science for its purposes. Nazi doctors committed numerous crimes in the name of science. Viktor Brack, in the forefront of the nazification of German medicine, attempted to justify the gruesome "medical experiments" that were carried out on unwilling victims with fatal results. Dozens of other doctors, all sworn by the Hippocratic Oath to alleviate human suffering, also participated in the Nazi experiments, committing atrocious crimes on healthy human specimens: injecting into their tormented bodies all kinds of poisonous chemicals; cutting out pieces of flesh without the benefit of anesthesia; and abandoning the subject to fight infections without antibiotics. If the subject survived, there would be more experiments. If not, it mattered little because plenty of other subjects were readily available.⁴⁸

None of these "doctors of doom" is more infamous than Joseph Mengele, the "purveyor of death" at Auschwitz, perhaps the most pernicious mass murderer of all time. Mengele almost single-handedly played god over millions of innocent souls, selecting

arbitrarily those who would forfeit their lives and those who might stay alive, by his grace, a while longer. He was not, however, alone. In every extermination camp, a "Doctor Mengele" selected a few from the wretched masses of the ever-arriving transports to stay alive a while longer.⁴⁹

A similar personality profile could, with some modifications, fit the other key Nazis as well. Hans Frank, the governor-general of Poland, was a member of the party from 1923 — he joined in time to participate in the beer hall putsch — and earned a doctorate of law in 1924. He was but twenty-four years old at the time.⁵⁰ Deputy Foreign Minister Martin Luther was widely perceived as a suave speaker and a self-confident defender of Germany's national interests. Besides his famous ancestor's name, however, Luther inherited a genteel anti-semitism in his diplomatic mission.⁵¹

Those very same Nazis who consigned millions to their deaths were also loving husbands and parents. Many of them were fond of animals, keeping pets in their homes. Quite a few were even vegetarians. What made them unique was that they could divorce murder, rape, and pillage from their personal lives. Their banality makes them even more frightening. Clearly, the National Socialist rot had eaten deeply into the root of German society.

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The National-Socialist Party and the German National (Conservative) Party

By Adolf Hitler

1922

Nothing is more liable to render the entire German-National (*deutsch-voelkisch*) movement, if not actually barren from the outset, then yet ineffective in its results, than the total lack of understanding of the fact that every idea is without value so long as its aim is not translated into action, but remains forever thought alone.

And, in the same way, no danger that is motivated by deliberate evil can ever be conquered through the mere recognition of its harmful nature or motivating power, but only through the deliberate confrontation with another power. In the whole of Russia there may today remain no more than 600,000 persons among its 150 million who are not horrified by the Jewish dictatorship of blood and its satanic infamy. Nevertheless, millions of helpless people suffer under the 600,000 destroyers, because the conviction of the latter expresses itself in bloody terror, but among the millions it is no more than impotent wishing perhaps despite their better knowledge....

...And the German-National movement may well be the only one to realize that the whole internal structure of our state is not Germanic, but rather Semitic, that all our actions, even our thinking, are today no longer German but Jewish.

The movement may bewail a hundred times that our people are being destroyed by the poison of a mammonism that is so alien to its inner feeling; it may discern that class struggle and party disputes will rob us of the last remnant of resistance; it may foresee with prophetic spirit that we too shall sink into the blood-swamp of Bolshevism, and may prove a thousand times that the ultimate cause of all this misery, that the ultimate germ of this disease of the race is the Jew – the German-National movement may recognize this, but it will not be able to help and cannot do so, until it leaves the field of theoretical knowledge and replaces it with the decision to transform understanding into political power: to replace long-suffering scholarly study with the willingness to apply the organization of power...And yet this is the real cause of the disintegration of our people. This cursed splitting of the nation into two classes that today oppose each

other as enemies to the death is our worst misfortune, and it alone is the reason why there is no hope for a better future for our nation.

For this reason only that movement which removes Germany's greatest national misfortune will be able to call itself National.

The movement which will no longer be proletarian and may no longer be bourgeois, but will be simply German.

The movement which unites those that strengthen this Germanism (*Deutschum*) day by day, not only in words but in all the thousandfold deeds of human activity....

In them lies the eternal fountain of the strength of our people. In them lies the future of our race. Whoever divides them strikes at Germany. Whoever unites them is National.

Finally, only that movement is national which does not bind this strength in order to lame it, but binds it in order to cast it as a solid block into the battle for victory for our own race.

And this battle will not be fought by majorities and parliamentary groups, but by the only form of majority that has shaped the fates of nations and states on this earth as long as it has existed. The majority of power and of the greater will and the strength to apply this power without consideration for mere numbers. To be German-National means not to dream today but to be a revolutionary; it means not to make do with academic knowledge; it means to have the passionate will to let deed some day follow on word.

Hundreds of thousands already know today what we need. But millions long for salvation. The first deed must today be to create an organization, from house to house, that will weld together the hundreds of thousands of the determined in order to fulfil the profound longings and hopes of the best of our people.

To liberate our race from inside, to free it from its chains on the outside....

H.A. Jacobsen and W. Jochmann, eds., *Ausgewahlte Dokumente zur Geschichte des nationalsozialismus* ("Selected Documents in the History of National-Socialism"), 1933-1945, I. Bielfeld, 1961.

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for the twelve years of Hitler's rule: Thirty-eight million people lost their lives; a third of the Jewish people and its nucleus in Europe were wiped off the face of the earth. The "devouring fire" of the crematoria at Auschwitz became the emblem of the era.

But the gap between what the Jewish leaders knew then and what we know now is as abysmal as the hell into which the Jews were cast during the Hitlerite era. Today it is recognized also by the German-Jewish leaders who managed to escape that they—the first to be attacked—failed to protect the status of the Jews as a constituency and failed even to save the lives of many individual Jews. German Jewry as a whole—Liberal, Zionist, and Orthodox—was also the first to founder. How did this come about? This question has been asked about each successive stage of the course that led to the bitter conclusion of the extermination process. It is a complicated question. To the degree that it can be answered at all, the answer also will be complex, for it must take into account German, Jewish, and worldwide circumstances and forces, each in itself a tangled weave of expectations and reality. How were all of these factors reflected in the "year of decision" that preceded Hitler's rise to power?

Germany in Crisis

As the fate of the Weimar Republic is well known and has been the subject of extensive research, I shall confine my discussion to some events that were decisive to its collapse and the rise of the Nazis.

The year 1932 was still shadowed by the world crisis that had begun on October 24, 1929 ("Black Thursday"), with the crash of the New York stock market. Germany had just recently begun to recover from the economic recession resulting from its defeat in World War I. All strata of the population were affected. By January 1932 unemployment had reached a high of 6,141,010.³ The country's crippled industries sank into debt: The workers, who had been fired in droves, loitered about the streets and crowded into the beer halls; unemployment benefits were insufficient to sustain families. The lower middle class of craftsmen and small businessmen was on the brink of ruin, and the financial difficulties pressed especially on small farmers; the job shortage dashed the hopes of youngsters, those from the working class as well as those at universities. The only people who were able to maintain their standard of living were the moneyed upper middle classes, particularly owners of large commercial enterprises, department stores, and chain stores.

Economic insecurity only exacerbated existing class and political antagonisms, which undermined Germany's parliamentary system starting in 1931. It became impossible to gather a majority in the Reichstag on which to base a government. In the spring of 1930 the country's aging president, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, invited Heinrich Brüning of the Catholic party Zentrum to form a government. The party did not rest on a coalition and therefore did not require a parliamentary vote of confidence. Brüning's so-called presidential government promulgated its laws through emergency decrees aimed by the cabinet at the

arrangement was made possible by a clause (Article 48) of the Weimar constitution that was designed to protect the republic from subversion, but it now served as an instrument for neutralizing the parliamentary system and paving the way for the transition toward a dictatorship.⁴ When the Social Democrats opposed these regulations, Brüning dispersed the Reichstag in the summer of 1930. This move led to the disastrous election of September 14 that increased the number of National Socialist delegates from 12 to 107 and made the Nazis the second largest party in the Reichstag after the Social Democrats.

Germany was not the only country in Europe racked by political turmoil during this period. Alongside the Fascist takeover in Italy, the forces of Fascism grew stronger in Rumania, Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic states in the 1930s. Eventually dictatorial regimes developed in all of these countries. The Social Democratic regime in Austria was centered in Vienna. Only Czechoslovakia remained a stable democracy thanks to the foundations laid by Tomáš Masaryk. In light of the unrest in southern and eastern Europe, the League of Nations tried to promote compromise, to maneuver between the opposing positions and interests of East and West, and to deal with the complex problem of the national minorities that remained or had been created in these areas after the war.⁵ The political situation had a great impact on the large Jewish concentrations of eastern and southern Europe even though the process of democratization and recognition of the rights of minorities had initially accorded them a new and improved status.

The severe political and social crisis that had overtaken Germany, fed by a harsh economic situation, was neither sudden nor incidental. The period beginning on November 9, 1918, the day on which the German Empire fell, to January 1933, when Hitler became chancellor, was marked by a succession of struggles within Germany and with forces beyond. The new democratic governments had to withstand attacks from the Communists on the left and the old ruling class on the right. Insurrections by these groups at the two poles of the political spectrum occurred in almost every one of the states that composed the republic; political terrorism and murder were commonplace during the first years of the Weimar era. The prime and strongest force sustaining the republic was the Social Democratic party, whose stronghold was in Prussia—the largest, wealthiest, and most industrialized of the German states. Yet the Social Democrats never won a majority in the national parliament, the Reichstag, and thus always had to find coalition partners. For this reason the center parties—such as Zentrum and the Democratic Party—which had been founded on the establishment of the republic—carried weight. On the right, the conservative owners of large estates, senior officials, officers, and the owners of major industries wielded the greatest influence. The circles, smarting from the loss of their social prestige, regarded the republic as their political home but merely as a way station on the road back to monarchy.

In 1932 the ground was cut out from under the democratic center as the conservative bourgeoisie began to flock to the National Socialists. One reason for this shift in allegiance was a fear of the rising power of the Communist party, which was competing with the Social Democrats on the Left. The Nazis received their greatest support from the lower middle class, which had been hardest hit by

The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, Leni Yahiel. Oxford University Press, New York - Oxford, 1990

start of the 1930s. Lacking the support of a strong political base like the Social Democrats and their labor organizations, young people from this strata eagerly turned to National Socialism and even joined the SA storm troopers as a way out of their forced idleness.

But economic advantage alone does not explain why these young people streamed into Hitler's ranks. They found in him two things they needed no less than bread: an outlet for their frustration and a sense of purpose. The outlet was to vent their hatred on the people who were blamed for all their ills, the Jews. The anti-Semitic canard was taken by this disintegrating social class as the key to why they were being crushed between two major blocs: the capitalists and the so-called Marxists. At the same time, Hitler offered them a positive role by calling on them to save the German fatherland. They were told that they would rescue not just themselves, but the whole of the German people, who had been humiliated by the despicable Versailles treaty. They were proffered the vision of being chosen to restore Germany to a ruling position in the world. This was how National Socialism imbued those looked upon as the dregs of humanity with a sense of security and self-respect. Now they were organized into a mass movement, marching together in the streets, attending huge public rallies, cheering their leader, Hitler. Most of the leaders and organizers came from the intellectual strata of school teachers, students, and academicians, to whom the Jews could easily be portrayed as their worst enemies for having usurped and corrupted German culture.⁷ Their proof for this contention was the relatively large number of Jews in the free professions, the press, literature, and the theater, which was in any event a cause of envy.

What happened in Germany was not an overt civil war. Hitler reached power as the result of a three-pronged action that undermined law and order by sowing fear and creating an atmosphere of impending civil war, by mounting a campaign of terrorism against the Jews, and most of all by inciting violent clashes between the Communists and the National Socialist SA. Hitler's second move was "the legal takeover of power." As far back as 1930 he had explained, "We will penetrate the legal institutions and thus turn our party into a decisive force. Once the constitutional rights are in our hands, naturally we will reshape the state in the form we think is correct."⁸ Meanwhile, his deputies held demonstrations in the Reichstag and systematically disrupted the orderly conduct of its sessions, thereby paralyzing the country's parliamentary life and the legislative work of the legitimate representatives of the people. The third prong of Hitler's assault on the seat of power was the vicious oral and written propaganda with which the Nazis flooded Germany, especially during the successive election campaigns of 1932.

In the spring of 1932 it took two elections to extend the tenure of President Hindenburg, who was then almost eighty-five years old. Though renowned as a national hero since World War I, Hindenburg did not easily defeat his rivals on the Left and the Right. In the second election Hitler received 36.8 percent of the vote; two weeks later, in the elections to the Prussian Parliament (Landtag), the National Socialist party became the largest in Prussia, with 38.3 percent of the vote, whereas the Social Democratic party lost about one-third of its seats and

The Collapse of the Republic

At the end of May 1932 Hindenburg abruptly dismissed the leader of the Zentrum party and appointed a Conservative, Franz von Papen, as the prime minister and minority Social Democratic government led by Otto Braun was toppled by arms on July 20, 1932, and Papen was appointed commissar of Prussia by emergency decree.¹⁰ Despite the ensuing furor within the Social Democratic Party and the willingness of members of the Reichsbanner, its paramilitary organization, to take up arms, the party's leaders feared the prospect of a civil war placed their hopes on the upcoming Reichstag elections scheduled to be eleven days later on July 31. In executing the coup, Papen was unwaveringly advancing the interests of the National Socialists; indeed, the next day, J. Edgar Hoover wrote in his diary: "The Reds have missed their great chance, and Goebbels wrote in his diary: 'In that he was right. Though the Social Democrats had lost a million votes (some 3 percent) in the July election, the workers' remains to the party and their leaders believed that they had made the right decision; would ultimately defeat their opponents by legal means. This view appeared vindicated when the National Socialists lost 4.1 percent of their votes in the election held on November 6, 1932, after the fall of the Papen government. Papen's successor, General Kurt von Schleicher, was likewise forced to resign on January 28, 1933, whereupon the president's Conservative party advised the reluctant Hindenburg to invite 'the Austrian corporal,' Adolf Hitler, to form a coalition government with the conservative German National Party (Deutschnationale Partei). On January 30 the new chancellor took Germany into his hands."¹²

Hitler rose to power not only because he was able to sense when the time was ripe to act but primarily because, blinded by their ambition to rule, the leaders of the other parties—left, right, and center—failed to gauge the severity of the crisis. The parties scoffed at the power of the National Socialists and assured the public that before long the people would see that Hitler did not hold the key to a better future. The Conservatives, headed by Alfred Hugenberg, deluded themselves that they would be able to shape the regime and determine its policy.¹³ They thought they would outsmart Hitler and that once he assumed the burden of rule he would be forced to moderate his views and take his direction from them. But Hitler soon showed them how badly they had misjudged him.

Emancipation: German Jewry's Asset

Whoever denies me the right to my German homeland denies me the right to my thoughts, my feelings, the language I speak, the air I breathe. Hence I must free myself from him as if he were a murderer.

Emancipation, a champion of emancipation, who began his career in the early half of the nineteenth century, these words appeared as the

close of 1893 by Martin Mendelssohn, the first president of the CV and chairman of its first annual meeting.¹⁴ The Jewish struggle for equal rights in Germany appeared to have reached its goal with the founding of the Weimar Republic. For a brief historic moment, the Jews believed that out of the ruins of World War I had arisen a democratic Germany that accorded genuine freedom and equality to all, a country with which they could fully identify, one whose laws they would defend and whose laws would protect them in return. The identity of interests and aspirations of Germany's young republic and its Jewish community found expression, *inter alia*, in the fact that it was a Jew, the lawyer and politician Hugo Preuss, who as minister of the interior chaired the committee that framed the Weimar constitution. However, it soon emerged that only a portion of the German people accepted the Jews as having a legitimate place in their nation and its political system—and even then not wholeheartedly.

Most of the Jews of Germany would have echoed Riesser's quoted statement. Their identification with Germany as their homeland was based first and foremost on a cultural foundation that combined both psychological and rational elements into a special and very powerful bond.¹⁵ Its most concrete expression was their devotion to the German language as a vehicle of their spirit and ethos—a development that traced back to the venerated figure of Moses Mendelssohn. To this covenant with Germany's culture we must add the Jews' integration into the developing economy, which was undergoing an accelerated industrialization.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the Jews remained a distinct and defined group. Even though their emancipation in Germany—as everywhere else in Western Europe—was conditional on forfeiting their internal Jewish autonomy, in a sense they continued to exist as a covert minority. On the one hand, they were responsible for this ambiguity because consciously or otherwise they were loath to abandon their Jewish identity; on the other hand, to a large degree this ambiguity was caused by a host society that accorded them civil, cultural, and economic equality but not social acceptance.¹⁷ The *kehillah* (communal body) was the one comprehensive Jewish organization that remained. In addition to providing services related to religious ritual and personal status (such as marriage and burial rites), the *kehillah* continued to function in only two spheres: Jewish education and social services.

Indeed, the Jews in Germany found themselves in the grip of a sharp paradox: by law they were citizens with equal rights, but most of German society, even the authorities, thwarted the full manifestation of this equality, making it necessary to wage a constant battle to protect these rights. For the most part, the Jews remained within the framework of their community, though its spiritual and psychological complexion had been superseded by the German cultural experience (the exception was the Orthodox sector of the community, which tried to combine "Torah with the ways of the land"). Their political life had no orientation than the collective defense of their rights.

The majority, under the leadership of the CV, wished "to unite all German citizens of the Jewish faith, regardless of religious and political orientation, in order to help them maintain their civil and social equality as well as help them to cultivate their German mindedness."¹⁸ Its defense campaign (called *Abwehr*) against anti-Semitism was conducted on the local and public relations

Since I have discussed this subject elsewhere, I shall confine the treatment here to a brief overview.¹⁹ The members of the CV addressed themselves first to the non-Jewish population in an attempt both to defend the Jews against attack and to demonstrate their involvement in German society. As the power of National Socialists increased at the end of the 1920s, this defensive action grew more intense, as we shall see later.

In contrast to the CV, the Zionist camp was so small as to be almost negligible with the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* (ZVfD) accounting for only one percent of the country's Jewish population. The Zionists' point of departure identical to that of the CV. They, too, regarded themselves as Germans in a way and were deeply rooted in German culture; they, too, found themselves in the paradoxical situation of feeling a sense of belonging to a nation that did not reciprocate by accepting them. But they reached the opposite conclusion from the CV in acknowledging the barrier that divided them from German society. Zionists regarded Germany as the Diaspora, but they imagined that it was precisely this approach that would enable them to live there, for they posited a good Zionist concerned about the fate of the Jewish people who wishes to contribute his contribution toward providing it with a home secured under public law to serve the country to which he belongs as a loyal patriot.²⁰

German Jewry During the Crisis Years

To better understand the Jewish predicament we must first clarify who the Jews of Germany were in 1932. The 1925 census established that there were 560,000 Jews in Germany at that time, composing 0.9 percent of the country's population. The exact number of Jews on the eve of Hitler's rise to power is not known; we must rely on estimates that range from 510,000 to 525,000 in the winter of 1932/1933.²¹ How did the complexion of this populace—comprising less than one percent of the total German population of 65 million—make it possible to protect the Jews of Germany as the "root of all evil" and "a cancer in the body of the nation" that must be cut out of that body in order to restore its health?

Two-thirds of the Jews were concentrated in cities of over 100,000 inhabitants, with over 50 percent divided among seven large communities. The remainder lived in settlements ranging from middle-sized cities down to villages. For example, the Jewish population of thirty-six villages was affiliated with the *kehillah* in the northern city of Stettin (Szczecin).²² On the whole, the number of Jews living in towns and villages was small and sometimes consisted of no more than a family or two, though taken together they constituted some 20 percent of the country's Jewish population. They were employed mostly in the traditional petty trade, and in providing services to local farmers. More characteristic of the Jewish population, however, was the concentration of the Jews in the large cities, where they tended to cluster in specific neighborhoods. In Berlin the Jewish population was divided on a class basis between the wealthy western sectors and the poorer neighborhoods on the eastern side of the city. In 1933, when the Jews' place of residence were still unchanged, 69.5 percent of all Berlin's Jews lived in five

borhoods (compared with 31.6 percent of the overall German population residing in the same areas) where they made up an average not of 3.8 percent of the population (which was their ratio of the city's population) but of 8.7 percent; in one section they even reached 13.5 percent of the population.²³ Thus the Jewish presence was strongly felt in these neighborhoods.

To this we must add that the Jews tended to be concentrated in certain professions and occupations—a phenomenon that went hand in hand with the process of urbanization, the influx to the cities as a by-product of industrialization, the concentration of capital, and the organization of businesses. The Jews in Germany (as in various other countries) had preceded the general population in this trend.

The Jews were involved mainly in brokerage, finance, and commerce, though toward the end of the Weimar period their influence in a number of branches of commerce—such as metals, where they had enjoyed a strong foothold—began to decline. The same was true of their share in the wholesale grain trade, which increasingly passed into the hands of the German cooperatives. For a while the Jews also played a pioneering role in various branches of the electrical industry and in the modernization of the textile industry, though their main contribution to the growth of the economy was in the establishment of the department and chain stores. Still, most of all they were employed in workshops and small and medium-sized stores connected with the food and clothing trades.

It is well known that there was a substantial rise in the number of Jews who practiced the free professions or were employed in academe—even to the point where in some of these professions the ratio of Jews was several times that of the population at large. Laborers composed 46.3 percent of the German work force in Germany, whereas 46 percent of the Jews were self-employed. The other striking statistic about the Jewish population was the number of people employed in the white-collar professions: 33.5 percent as opposed to 12.5 percent of the population at large. On the other hand, the number of Jews in the upper social, political, or military echelons was very small.²⁴ Similarly, certain spheres of the economy were categorically closed to Jews—notably heavy industry and the mining and chemical industries—and this, in turn, influenced Jewish banking.²⁵

Hence, the Jews lacked representation in Germany's two main centers of economic power: heavy industry and the working class.²⁶ The overwhelming majority of them belonged to the middle class. As a rule the Jewish craftsmen and tradesmen were better off than their German counterparts. What is more, their German neighbors saw that it was the Jews who introduced the "abominable" innovation of the department store or the large retail store that was able to mobilize credit and sell a greater selection of items at lower prices, thereby ruining the petty tradesmen.

As far back as 1911 demographic data had indicated that the Jewish population of Germany was aging at a rapid pace; the forecast was that it would decrease to the point of extinction even without being subjected to persecution. The reasons for this trend were the low birthrate, the high ratio of deaths over births, and the high rate of intermarriage, which reached 60 percent by 1932. Also noted was the rising incidence of Jews leaving the framework of the kehillah *vis-à-vis* the author

are no statistics).²⁷ This, then, was the Jewish community that the Nazis' Semitic doctrine portrayed as a threat to the biological vitality of the German people.

The community had to grapple with many problems caused by the influx of Jews from Eastern Europe who wished to settle in Germany. This was not a phenomenon. It could be traced back to the massive wave of emigration that moved westward at the end of the nineteenth century and left a trail of Ostjuden as it passed through Germany.²⁸ In 1933 close to 99,000 of the Jews in Germany, 19.8 percent of the country's Jewish population—were East European natives. The demographic structure of this element was more positive than that of the veteran German-Jewish community and had an ameliorating effect on the prations. Most of these Jews settled in the cities, primarily the large cities, where assumed a prominent role in the textile and leather industries and were involved in the development of the clothing industry, especially its marketing side. Activities in the fur trade were a boon to the German economy. In the free professions they made the greatest impact in the arts, primarily the plastic arts, theater, and music. Hence, the widespread negative image of this population backward "ghetto Jews" is quite exaggerated. Still, not all their activities had official results. Thus, the dealings of the Jewish land speculators among this milieu created a problem of real estate owned by foreign nationals, especially Berlin. However, most of the emigrants from Eastern Europe belonged to the middle and lower classes, and not a few of them lived in the poorer sections of town.

Though variegated in terms of its cultural background, occupations, and standing, the Jewish population nonetheless made up a distinct community that was easy to assail and depict before the bourgeoisie as the main cause of its suffering and a menace to the future. The anti-Semitic ideology countenanced envy felt toward the Jews, and the Nazi party channeled the frustration into "people's rage," while the maligned Jewish population—divided as it was socially and ideologically—had no political base of its own.

Jewish Activities in Weimar Germany

In 1925 Jews were living in 3,000 locations in Germany organized in, or associated with, 1,800 independent kehillot.³⁰ Officially, the kehillah was defined as a "Body Corporate under Public Law"; in cooperation with the treasury, it had the right to collect taxes, which were fixed in proportion to the general tax rate. The kehillah was headed by a board of deputies; the larger ones also had councils were chosen in general elections, the size of the administration being determined by the size of the community's membership. The communities were subordinate to the governments of Germany's constituent states, and the greatest number of them were in Prussia: 720 communities encompassing four hundred thousand Jews. During the Weimar period the communities affiliated into statewide unions with the Prussian union recognized as the leading organization of German Jews as a whole. These unions represented the communities vis-à-vis the author

Witness to the Holocaust. Michael Berenshaw. Harper Collins.
New York 1997.



I. THE BOYCOTT

On 10:00 A.M. Saturday April 1, 1933, the Nazis began a boycott of Jewish businesses and offices in cities and towns throughout Germany. It was the first systematic act attacking Jewish economic life in Germany. Storm troopers, the Nazi Party militia, were stationed at the entrances to Jewish shops. The Star of David was painted in yellow and black across thousands of doors and windows. Signs read: "Germans Defend Yourself! Don't Buy from Jews," "The Jews are Our Misfortune," or "Jude" [Jew].

In the first sixty days of the Nazi regime, most violence against the Jews had been directed against individuals. The boycott was the first nationwide act against the entire German Jewish community.

The decision to boycott was made directly by Hitler. He was stung by criticism of his regime abroad and faced pressure from Nazi Party militants at home. Foreign protests of the Nazi regime had intensified in response to reports of increased violence against German Jews and Jewish businesses. There had also been some discussion of an American boycott of German goods.

With the American threat as pretext, Hitler set the party machinery in motion. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, was summoned by Hitler on March 26. Of the instructions he received, Goebbels wrote: "We must . . . proceed to a large scale boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany. Perhaps the foreign Jews will think better of the matter when their racial comrades in Germany begin to get it in the neck."

The boycott began within a week.

Scheduled to last for five days, the boycott ended within twenty-four hours. It could be reimposed at a moment's notice.

For many Jews in Germany, the boycott was a sign of things to come.

Some fled. Some took their own lives in despair. Others appealed to the German public's better judgment, urging noncompliance with the boycott through leaflets and advertisements.

Others became defiant. Robert Weltsch, editor of a German-language Jewish newspaper, saw the Star of David used by the boycotters as a sign of shame. He recalled the medieval markings imposed on German Jews and, eerily anticipating future humiliations, he urged his readers: "Wear it with Pride, the Yellow Badge."

One week after the boycott, the government announced the first of a series of laws discriminating against the Jews. Less grandiose, but far more ominous than the boycott, these laws demonstrated the Nazi determination to be rid of the Jews.

In the sections below, we will read an anonymous declaration signed by the "Party Leadership," but reflecting in style and attitude Hitler's initiative. Historians believe that



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the eleven points of implementation are the work of Goebbels, holder of a Ph.D. in literature and philosophy from the University of Heidelberg, whose task it was to round up support for this effort, and from whose Diary we will read.

We will also read Robert Weitsch's response to the boycott, a call to self-acknowledgment, a call to greatness.

DECLARATION OF THE BOYCOTT BY THE NAZI PARTY LEADERSHIP

MARCH 28, 1933

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

After fourteen years of inner conflict, the German Volk—politically overcoming its ranks, classes, professions, and confessional divisions—has elected an *Erhebung* which put a lightning end to the Marxist-Jewish nightmare.

In the weeks following January 30, a unique military revolution took place in Germany.

In spite of long years of exceedingly severe suppression and persecution, the masses of millions that support the Government of the National Revolution have, in a very calm and disciplined manner, given the new Reich leadership legal cover for the implementation of its reform of the German nation from top to bottom. On March 5 the overwhelming majority of Germans eligible to vote declared its confidence in the new regime. The completion of the national revolution has thus become the demand of the *Volk*.

The Jewish-Marxist *Bonzen* (bigwigs) deserted their position of power with deplorable cowardice. Despite all the fuss, not a single one dared to raise any serious resistance.

For the most part, they have left the masses they had seduced in the lurch and fled abroad, taking with them their stuffed strongboxes.

The authors and beneficiaries of our misfortune owe the fact that they were spared—almost without exception—solely to the incomparable discipline and order with which this act of overthrowing was conducted.

Hardly a hair on their heads was harmed.

Compare this act of self-discipline on the part of the national uprising in Germany with, for instance, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which claimed the lives of over three million people, and you will begin to appreciate what a debt of gratitude the criminals guilty of the disintegration in Germany owe the powers of the national uprising. Compare the terrible battles and destruction of the Revolution of these very November Men themselves—their shooting of hostages in the years 1918 and '19, the slaughtering of defenseless opponents—and you will once again perceive how enormous the difference is between them and the national uprising.

The men presently in power solemnly proclaimed to the world that they wanted to live in international peace. In this, the German *Volk* constitutes a loyal *Gefolgschaft* [following]. Germany wants neither worldwide confusion nor international intrigues. National revolutionary Germany is firmly resolved to put an end to internal mismanagement!

Now that the domestic enemies of the nation have been eliminated by the *Volk* itself, what we have long been waiting for will now come to pass. The Communist and Marxist criminals and their Jewish intellectual instigators, who, having made off with their capital stocks across the border in the nick of time, are now unfolding an unscrupulous, treasonous campaign of agitation against the German *Volk* as a whole from abroad. Because it became impossible for them to continue lying in Germany, they

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have begun, in the capitals of the former Entente, to continue the same agitation against the young national uprising that they had already pursued at the outbreak of the War against the Germany of that time.

Lies and slander of positively hair-raising perversity are being launched about Germany. Horror stories of dismembered Jewish corpses, gouged-out eyes, and hacked-off hands are circulated for the purpose of defaming the German *Volk* in the world for a second time, just as they had succeeded in doing once before in 1914. The animosity of millions of innocent human beings, i.e., peoples with whom the German *Volk* wishes only to live in peace, is being stirred up by these unscrupulous criminals. They want German goods and German labor to fall victim to the international boycott. It seems they think the misery in Germany is not bad enough as it is; they have to make it worse!

They lie about Jewish females who have supposedly been killed, about Jewish girls allegedly being raped before the eyes of their parents, about cemeteries being ravaged! The whole thing is one big lie invented for the sole purpose of provoking a new world-war agitation!

Standing by and watching this lunatic crime any longer would mean being implicated.

The National Socialist Party will therefore now take defensive action against this universal crime with means that are capable of striking a blow to the guilty parties.

For the guilty ones are among us, they live in our midst and day after day misuse the right to hospitality which the German *Volk* has granted them.

At a time when millions of our people have nothing to live on and nothing to eat, while hundreds of thousands of German brain-workers degenerate on the streets, these intellectual Jewish men of letters are sitting in our midst and have no qualms about claiming the right to our hospitality.

What would America do were the Germans in America to commit a sin against America like the one these Jews have committed against

Germany? The National Revolution did not harm a hair of their heads. They were allowed to go about their business as before; but, mind you, corruption will be exterminated, regardless of who commits it. Just as belonging to a Christian confession or our own *Volk* does not constitute a license for criminals, neither does belonging to the Jewish race or the Mosaic religion.

For decades, Germany indiscriminately allowed all aliens to enter the country. There are 135 people to one square kilometer of land in this country.

In America there are less than 15. In spite of this fact, America saw it fit to set quotas for immigration and even exclude certain peoples from immigrating.

Without any regard to its own distress, Germany refrained for decades from instituting these measures. As our reward, we now have a clique of Jewish men of letters, professors, and profiteers inciting the world against us while millions of our own *Volksgenossen* are unemployed and degenerating.

This will be put to a stop now!

The Germany of the National Revolution is not the Germany of a cowardly bourgeois mentality.

We see the misery and wretchedness of our own *Volksgenossen* and feel obliged to leave nothing undone which could prevent further damage to this, our *Volk*.

For the parties responsible for these lies and slander are the Jews in our midst. It is they who are the source of this campaign of hate and lies against Germany. It would be in their power to call the liars in the rest of the world into line.

Because they choose not to do so, we will make sure that this crusade of hatred and lies against Germany is no longer directed against the innocent German *Volk*, but against the responsible agitators themselves.

This smear campaign of boycotting and atrocities must not and shall not injure the German *Volk*, but rather the Jews themselves—a thousand times more severely.

Thus the following order is issued to all party sections and party organizations:

ITEM 1: ACTION COMMITTEES FOR A BOYCOTT AGAINST THE JEWS

Action Committees are to be formed in each *Ortsgruppe* [local chapter] and organizational body of the NSDAP for conducting a practical, organized boycott of Jewish businesses, Jewish goods, Jewish doctors, and Jewish lawyers. The Action Committees shall be responsible for ensuring that the boycott does not do any harm to innocent parties but instead does all the more harm to the guilty parties.

ITEM 2: UTMOST PROTECTION FOR ALL FOREIGNERS

The Action Committees shall be responsible for providing the utmost protection for all foreigners, without regard to their religion and origins or race. The boycott is a purely defensive action that is aimed exclusively at the *Judentum* in Germany.

ITEM 3: BOYCOTT PROPAGANDA

The Action Committees shall immediately popularize the boycott by means of propaganda and enlightenment. Basic principle: no good German is still buying from a Jew or allowing the Jew or his henchmen to offer him goods. The boycott must be a universal one. It will be borne by the entire *Volk* and must hit Jewry where it is most vulnerable.

ITEM 4: THE CENTRAL MANAGEMENT: PG. STREICHER

In cases of doubt, one is to refrain from boycotting businesses until informed otherwise by the Central Committee in Munich. The Chairman of the Central Committee is Pg. Streicher.

ITEM 5: SURVEILLANCE OF NEWSPAPERS

The Action Committees shall keep the newspapers under sharp surveillance in order to ascertain the extent to which they are participating

in the enlightenment crusade of the German *Volk* against the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities [*Greuelhetze*] abroad. If newspapers are not doing so or doing so only within a limited scope, it is to be seen to that they are instantly removed from every building inhabited by Germans. No German man and no German business is to continue advertising in such newspapers. These papers must become victims of public contempt, written for fellow members of the Jewish race, but not for the German *Volk*.

ITEM 6: BOYCOTT AS A MEANS OF PROTECTING GERMAN LABOR

In conjunction with the factory cell organizations of the party, the Action Committees must carry the propaganda of the enlightenment concerning the effects of the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities on German labor and thus the German worker into the factories, enlightening the workers in particular as to the necessity of a national boycott as a defensive measure for the protection of German labor.

ITEM 7: ACTION COMMITTEES DOWN TO THE LAST VILLAGE!

The Action Committees must be driven into the smallest villages in order to hit especially the Jewish traders on the flatlands.

As a basic principle, it should be stressed that the boycott is a defensive measure which was forced upon us.

ITEM 8: THE BOYCOTT IS TO COMMENCE ON APRIL 1!

The boycott shall not begin in a dissipated fashion but abruptly. For this reason all preparations are to be made instantly. The SA and SS will be given orders to set up guards to warn the population not to set foot in Jewish shops from the moment the boycott begins. The beginning of the boycott is to be publicized on posters and in the press, in handbills, etc.

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The boycott shall commence abruptly at 10:00 in the morning on Saturday, April 1. It will be maintained until an order from the party leadership commands that it be discontinued.

ITEM 9: DEMAND OF THE MASSES FOR RESTRICTED ADMISSION

In tens of thousands of mass assemblies that are to reach as far as the smallest village, the Action Committees shall organize the demand for the introduction of a restriction of the number of Jews employed in all professions which should be relative to their proportion in the German population. In order to increase the impact of the action, this demand is initially to be confined to three areas:

- A. admission to the German secondary schools and universities;
- B. the medical profession;
- C. the legal profession.

ITEM 10: ENLIGHTENMENT ABROAD

Another further task of the Action Committees is to ensure that every German who upholds any connection whatsoever abroad shall make use of this to circulate in letters, telegrams, and telephone calls in an enlightening manner the truth that law and order reigns in Germany; that it is the single most ardent wish of the German *Volk* to be able to pursue its work in peace and live in peace with the rest of the world; and that it is fighting the battle against the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities purely as a defensive battle.

ITEM 11: CALM, DISCIPLINE, AND NO ACTS OF VIOLENCE!

The Action Committees are responsible for ensuring that this entire battle is conducted with the utmost calm and the greatest discipline. Refrain from harming a single hair of a Jew's head in the future as well! We will come to terms with this smear campaign simply by the drastic force of these measures cited.

More than ever before it is necessary that the entire party stand behind the leadership in blind obedience as one man.

National Socialists, you have wrought the miracle of sending the November State cartwheeling in a single offensive; you will accomplish this second task the same way. International *Weltjudentum* should know one thing:

The government of the National Revolution does not exist in a vacuum. It is the representation of the working German *Volk*. Whoever attacks it, is attacking Germany! Whoever slanders it, is slandering the nation! Whoever fights it, has declared war on 65 million people! We were able to come to terms with the Marxist agitators in Germany; they will not force us to our knees, even if they are now proceeding with their renegade crimes against the people from abroad.

National Socialists! Saturday, at the stroke of ten, *Judentum* will know upon whom it has declared war.

National Socialist German Workers' Party/Party Leadership

EXTRACT FROM JOSEPH GOEBBELS'S DIARY

APRIL 1, 1933

The boycott against the international atrocity propaganda has burst forth in full force in Berlin and the whole Reich. I drive along the Tauentzien Street in order to observe the situation. All Jewish businesses are closed. SA men are posted outside their entrances. The public has everywhere proclaimed its solidarity. The discipline is exemplary. An imposing performance! It all takes place in complete quiet; in the Reich too ...

In the afternoon 150,000 Berlin workers marched to the Lustgarten, to join us in the protest against the incitement abroad. There is indescribable excitement in the air. The press is

already operating in total unanimity. The boycott is a great moral victory for Germany. We have shown the world abroad that we can call up the entire nation without thereby causing the least turbulence or excesses. The Führer has once more struck the right note.

At midnight the boycott will be broken off by our own decision. We are now waiting for the resultant echo in the foreign press and propaganda.

APRIL 2, 1933

The effects of the boycott are already clearly noticeable. The world is gradually coming to its



A Jewish-owned store is covered with graffiti and plastered with signs of rhyming anti-Semitic verse. April 1, 1933. Courtesy of USHMM-Photo Archives.

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LAW FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL CIVIL SERVICE

APRIL 7, 1933

The Reich Government has enacted the following law, promulgated herewith:

1

1. To restore a national professional civil service and to simplify administration, civil servants may be dismissed from office in accordance with the following regulations, even where there would be no grounds for such action under the prevailing law.



Portrait of a Jewish schoolboy. Jews were forced to wear the yellow star in Germany beginning September 1941, two years after the decree was introduced in Poland. Yad Vashem.

2. For the purposes of this law the following are to be considered civil servants: direct and indirect officials of the Reich, direct and indirect officials of the Länder, officials of local councils, and of the federations of local councils, officials of public corporations as well as of institutions and enterprises of equivalent status. . . . The provisions will apply also to officials of social insurance organizations having the status of civil servants. . . .

2

1. Officials who entered service after November 9th, 1918 without having the required or customary education or ability are to be dismissed. Their salaries are to be paid to them for three consecutive months after their dismissal.
2. They have no claim whatever to temporary allowance, pension or sustenance of their survivors nor any claim to remaining in possession of their titles and uniforms.
3. In case of distress, especially if they have to care for poor relatives, they may obtain an annuity up to a third of the salary they received in their last position. This annuity, however, may be withdrawn at any time. They have no claim to being insured ex post according to the provisions of the Reich Social Insurance.
4. The provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3 are similarly to be applied to persons described in paragraph 1 who have retired before this law becomes effective.

3

1. Civil servants of non-Aryan descent must retire; as regards the honorary officials, they must be discharged.

2. The above paragraph does not apply to officials who were already employed as civil servants on or before August 1st, 1914, or who, during the World War, fought at the front for Germany or her allies, or whose fathers or sons were killed in action in the World War.
3. Further exceptions may be granted by the Reich minister of the interior in cooperation with the competent heads of the specific ministries, or by the supreme authorities of the States, as to civil servants working abroad.

4

Officials who, judged from their previous political activity, do not warrant that they will always unreservedly stand for their national country, may be dismissed. For three consecutive months after their dismissal they get their regular salaries. After that time they get three-quarters of their pension and corresponding maintenance of their survivors.

5

1. Every official must consent to being removed to a different office of the same or an equal career, even to an office of a lesser rank and salary, the costs for changing the residence being compensated for, if service demands it. The official who is removed to an office of lesser rank and salary retains his former title and salary.
2. The official may, within one month, demand retirement instead of removal to an office of lesser rank and salary (paragraph 1).

6

For the purpose of simplifying the administration, officials may be retired even if they are not yet unfit for service. When officials are retired for this reason, the vacancy must not be filled.

7

1. Dismissal, removal to another office and retirement are decreed by the supreme authority of the Reich or States which makes final decisions barring the legal way.
2. The provisions according to 2 to 6 must be carried through at the latest by September 30th, 1933. This time may be shortened in cooperation with the minister of the interior, if the competent supreme authorities of the Reich or States declare that within their administration the provisions of this law are carried through.

8

Officials who are retired or dismissed according to 3, 4, are not granted a pension, if they have not at least completed a ten-year service; this also applies to cases where according to the existing provisions of the laws of the Reich and States a pension is being granted after a shorter term of service. Sections 36, 47 and 49 of the Reich Civil Service Law, the law of July 4th, 1921, concerning an increased computation of the term of service during the war (*Reichsgesetzblatt*, page 825) and similar provisions of the Civil Service Laws are not affected hereby.

9

For officials dismissed or retired according to sections 3, 4, the following provisions in regard to pensions are to be applied:

1. According to the existing provisions, only time served in the Reich, States or Communes may be taken into consideration when computing the term of service worthy of pension, beside service completed in the last position. Even computation of this service is only admissible if it is connected with the last position in education and career; such a connection especially is to be found if the elevation of an official from a lesser career to a higher one is to be regarded as a due advancement. If

- the official would have obtained a higher pension in a former position duly acquired through education and ability by adding the later years of service, the provision that is more favorable for the official is applied.
2. The computation of the length of service with public law bodies and similar organizations is regulated by the provisions as to the execution of the law.
 3. Settlements and promises as to pension for services which do not conform with the execution of the provisions of paragraph 1 become invalid.
 4. The minister of the interior in cooperation with the minister of finances may adjust the rigors of the law affecting officials of the Reich and the public law bodies that are subject to supervision by the Reich; rigors affecting other officials may be adjusted by the supreme authorities of the States.
 5. Sections 1 to 4 as well as 8 are also to be applied to officials who definitely or temporarily retired before this law becomes effective and to whom sections 2 to 4 could have been applied if the officials had still been in service at the time when this law becomes effective.

The new settlement of the length of service as regards pension and the settlement of the pension proper or of the temporary allowance must be made at the latest by September 30th, 1933, effective October 1st, 1933.

10

1. Directions given as to the amount of the salaries of officials must serve as a basis for fixing the salaries and pensions. If decisions of the competent authorities as to application of the directions are not at hand as yet, they must be made without delay.
2. If officials according to the decision of the competent authority as to the application of the directions have obtained higher salaries than they were entitled to, they have to return the surplus they received since April

1st, 1932 to the pay office from which the salaries were paid. The objection that enrichment no longer exists (section 812 ff, Civil Law Book) is excluded.

3. Sections 1 and 2 also apply to persons who have retired within one year before this law becomes effective.

11

For officials retired from office according to sections 3, 4, the following provisions with regard to pensions are to be applied:

1. If, in fixing the term of service with regard to pension, service outside the territory of the Reich, the States or Communes has been added, the term of service must be fixed anew. Only employment in the service of the Reich, the States, Communes, or public law bodies and similar institutions and organizations, according to the provisions for executing this law, may be computed. The Reich minister of the interior in cooperation with the Reich minister of finances may make exceptions for officials of the Reich, the supreme authorities of the States may make exceptions for other officials.
2. If according to section 1 the term of service with regard to salary is to be fixed anew, the new settlement of pension must be made in the case of officials who have been dismissed or retired according to sections 3, 4.
3. The same applies to persons mentioned in section 9, paragraph 5.

12

1. The salaries of the Reich ministers appointed since November 9th, 1918 that have not been fixed according to the provisions of sections 16 to 24 of the Law Concerning the Reich Ministers, of March 27th, 1930 (*Reichsgesetzblatt I*, page 96), be fixed anew. In making the new settlement, the above provisions of the Law Concerning the Reich Ministers are applied in such a

way, as if they had already been in force at time of the retirement of the minister from office. Accordingly, surplus received since April 1st, 1932 is to be returned. The objection that enrichment no longer exists (section 812 ff, Civil Law Book) is inadmissible.

2. Paragraph 1 applies to members of a State government appointed since November 9th, 1918 with the modification instead of the Law Concerning the Reich Ministers, the respective provisions of the State laws are applied. But salaries may be paid only up to an amount that is in keeping with the rules of sections 16 to 24 of the Law Concerning the Reich Ministers.
3. The new settlement of the salaries must be made not later than December 31st, 1933.
4. Additional payments are not made.

13

The pensions of the survivors are computed by appropriately applying sections 8 to 12.

14

1. Even after dismissal or retirement of officials according to this law disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against them for the purpose of deprivation of pension, sustenance of survivor title and uniform because of crimes committed in office. Proceedings must be instituted at the latest by December 31st, 1933.
2. Paragraph 1 also applies to persons who have retired within one year before this law becomes effective and to whom sections 2 to 4 would have been applicable if these persons had still been in office at the time when this law becomes effective.

15

The provisions concerning officials similarly apply to clerks and workers.

Details are regulated through provisions as to executing the law.

16

If in executing this law there appear unjust rigors, higher salaries or transitional fees may be granted within the scope of the general provisions. Decisions hereto are made by the minister of the interior in cooperation with the minister of finances for officials of the Reich, and by the supreme authorities of the States for other officials.

17

1. The Reich minister of the interior in cooperation with the Reich minister of finances issues the necessary regulations and administrative provisions for carrying out and executing this law.
2. If necessary the supreme authorities of the States issue supplementary regulations. In doing so they must confine themselves to the framework of the regulations of the Reich.

18

At the end of the terms fixed in this law, the general provisions as to the Professional Civil Service will be put into force again without derogation of the measures taken on the basis of this law.

Berlin, April 7th, 1933.

The Reich Chancellor
ADOLF HITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Reich Minister of Finances
COUNT SCHWERIN VON KROSIGK



IV. THE NUREMBERG LAWS

At the annual Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg in September 1935, the German parliament decreed the two laws that became the centerpieces of the anti-Jewish legislation: The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor and the Reich Citizenship Law.

Citizenship in the Reich was restricted to persons of "German or kindred blood." Only citizens—i.e., racial Germans—had full civil and political rights. Jews could no longer be citizens, merely state subjects.

"To protect German blood and honor" marriages and sexual relations between Jews and "citizens of German or related blood" were prohibited as was the employment of Aryan women under the age of forty-five in Jewish households. Jews were not permitted to fly the Reich flag. Neither the term "Jew" nor the term "German or kindred blood" were defined.

Though these laws may seem innocuous and merely the work of bureaucrats, categorization had deadly consequences. Definition was the first step toward destruction.

At Nuremberg, Jews were defined and persecuted, not for the religion they practiced or the beliefs they affirmed, but by the blood of their grandparents. Thus, under these decrees, Roman Catholic priests and nuns and Protestant pastors who had converted, or whose parents had converted to Christianity lost their rights because they were defined as Jews.

Definition also established a precedent, guidance for the future. Later, the Germans imposed these laws upon the lands they occupied and these regulations served as a "model" for the Nazi treatment of Gypsies.

At Nuremberg the German nation was divided into Germans and Jews. Two terms that were used in the original laws remained undefined—"Jew" and "German or kindred blood." Since the laws contained criminal provisions, the bureaucracy faced an urgent task. Terms had to be defined; within two months they were.

According to Raul Hilberg, the Nazi Party and the civil service clashed in their efforts to define a Jew. The civil service wanted to protect the "German" part of the half-Jew. The Nazi Party viewed the part-Jew as a more serious threat than the full-Jew because in addition to Jewish characteristics, he or she possessed many Germanic ones. The German nation must be protected from racial contamination, they argued.

In the end two categories were developed: full-Jew (any person with three Jewish grandparents) and part-Jew.

In time, the category of half-Jews, or *Mischlinge* (mongrels), was further refined into two classes. First-class *Mischlinge* were those descended from two Jewish grandparents, but not practicing Judaism and not married to a Jewish spouse.

Second-class *Mischlinge* were the descendants of only one Jewish grandparent.

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In Germany, church offices rather than the city clerk registered all births until 1875. Once the people learned of the laws, they immediately besieged the church offices with requests for legal documentation of their German (non-Jewish) ancestry. "Licensed family researchers" developed a new enterprise of researching the ancestry of their clientele.

Reaction in the Jewish community was mixed. The Reich Representation of Jews in Germany was reserved, their response restrained. Clarification of the Jewish legal status "must create a basis for a tolerable relationship between the German and Jewish people," they said.

The Zionists understood that "Jews had lost the legal status of equality." But, at the very least, they hoped the Nuremberg Laws would provide a "firm legal basis" for Jewish life.

With the Nuremberg Laws, emancipation, the process by which Jews were given the full rights of citizenship in the lands of their birth, had ended in Germany.

In the readings that follow, we will read the Nuremberg Laws as proclaimed by the Reichstag on September 15 and the supplementary regulations to those laws promulgated sixty days later. We will also read of the response of the *Reichsvertretung*, the Reich Representation.

REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

The Reichstag unanimously enacted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

1

1. A subject of the state is a person who enjoys the protection of the German Reich and who in consequences has specific obligations toward it.
2. The status of a subject of the state is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and State Citizenship Law.

2

1. A Reich citizen is a subject of the state who is of German and related blood, who proves by his conduct that he is a willing and fit faithfully to serve the German people and the Reich.

2. Reich citizenship is acquired through the granting of a Reich Citizenship Certificate.
3. The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights in accordance with the law.

3
The Reich minister of the interior, in coordination with the deputy of the Führer will issue the legal and administrative orders required to implement and complete this Law.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935 at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor
ADOLF HITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

Reichsbürgergesetz.

Vom 15. September 1935.

Der Reichstag hat einstimmig das folgende Gesetz beschlossen, das hiermit verkündet wird:

§ 1

(1) Staatsangehöriger ist, wer dem Schutzverband des Deutschen Reiches angehört und ihm dafür besonders verpflichtet ist.

(2) Die Staatsangehörigkeit wird nach den Vorschriften des Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetzes erworben.

§ 2

(1) Reichsbürger ist nur der Staatsangehörige deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes, der durch sein Verhalten beweis, daß er gewillt und geeignet ist, in Treue dem Deutschen Volk und Reich zu dienen.

(2) Das Reichsbürgerrecht wird durch Verleihung des Reichsbürgerbriefes erworben.

(3) Der Reichsbürger ist der alleinige Träger der vollen politischen Rechte nach Maßgabe der Gesetze.

§ 3

Der Reichsminister des Innern erläßt im Einvernehmen mit dem Stellvertreter des Führers die zur Durchführung und Ergänzung des Gesetzes erforderlichen Rechtsverordnungen und Verwaltungsanordnungen.

Nürnberg, den 15. September 1935,
am Reichsparteitag der Freiheit.

Der Führer und Reichskanzler

Adolf Hitler

Der Reichsminister des Innern

Brüd

Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre.

Vom 15. September 1935.

Durchdrungen von der Erkenntnis, daß die Reinheit des deutschen Blutes die Voraussetzung für den Fortbestand des Deutschen Volkes ist, und besorgt von dem unerbittlichen Willen, die Deutsche Nation für alle Zukunft zu sichern, hat der Reichstag einstimmig das folgende Gesetz beschlossen, das hiermit verkündet wird:

§ 1

(1) Eheschließungen zwischen Juden und Staatsangehörigen deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes sind verboten. Gleiches gilt für Ehen, die vor Inkrafttreten dieses Gesetzes im Ausland geschlossen sind.

AREA 12 GERMANY JEWS, PERSECUTION OF
1935. THE BASIC "NUERNBERGER GESETZE"
(LAWS AGAINST THE JEWS). OSS 736583

Texts of the "Reich Citizenship Law" of September 15, 1935, and the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor" of September 15, 1935 (Nuremberg Race Laws). National Archives/Courtesy USHMM-Photo Archive.

LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOR

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

Imbued with the insight that the purity of German blood is prerequisite for the continued existence of the German people and inspired by the inflexible will to ensure the existence of the German nation for all times, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is hereby promulgated:

1

1. Marriages between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
2. Only the state attorney may initiate the annulment suit.

2

Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood is forbidden.

3

Jews must not employ in their households female subjects of German or kindred blood who are under forty-five years old.

4

1. Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich and national flag and to display the Reich colors.
2. They are, on the other hand, allowed to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right enjoys the protection of the state.

5

1. Whoever violates the prohibition in paragraph 1 will be punished by penal servitude.
2. A male who violates the prohibition in paragraph 2 will be punished either by imprisonment or penal servitude.
3. Whoever violates the provisions of paragraphs 3 or 4 will be punished by imprisonment up to one year and by a fine, or by either of these penalties.

6

The Reich minister of the interior, in agreement with the deputy of the Führer and the Reich minister of justice, will issue the legal and administrative orders required to implement and supplement this law.

7

The law takes effect on the day following promulgation, except for paragraph 3, which goes into force January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935 at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom
The Führer and Reich Chancellor
ADOLF HITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Reich Minister of Justice
The Deputy of the Führer and Reich Minister without Portfolio

RESPONSE OF THE *REICHSVERTRETUNG* TO THE NUREMBERG LAWS

SEPTEMBER 24, 1935

The *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland** announces the following:

I

The laws decided upon by the Reichstag in Nuremberg have come as the heaviest of blows for the Jews in Germany. But they must create a basis on which a tolerable relationship becomes possible between the German and the Jewish people. The *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* is willing to contribute to this end with all its powers. A precondition for such a tolerable relationship is the hope that the Jews and the Jewish communities of Germany will be enabled to keep a moral and economic means of existence by the halting of defamation and boycott.

The organization of the life of the Jews in Germany requires governmental recognition of an autonomous Jewish leadership. The *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* is the agency competent to undertake this. It has the support, with few exceptions, of the totality of the Jews and Jewish communities, particularly the State Association of Jewish Communities [*Landesverbände*] and all the city communities, as well as the independent Jewish organizations: Zionist Federation of Germany [*Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*], Central Organization of Jews in Germany [*Zentralverein der Juden in Deutschland*], Union of Jewish Veterans [*Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten*], Association for Liberal Judaism [*Vereinigung für das religiös-liberale Judentum*], the Organized Orthodox Community [*die organisierte Gemeinde-Orthodoxie*], Union of Jewish Women [*Jüdischer Frauenbund*], Reich

**Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*—National Representation of the Jews in Germany.

Committee for Jewish Youth Organizations [*Reichsausschuss der Jüdischen Jugendverbände*].

The most urgent tasks for the *Reichsvertretung*, which it will press energetically and with full commitment, following the avenues it has previously taken, are:

1. Our own Jewish educational system must serve to prepare the youth to become upright Jews, secure in their faith, who will draw the strength to face the onerous demands which life will make on them from conscious solidarity with the Jewish community, from work for the Jewish present and faith in the Jewish future. In addition to transmitting knowledge, the Jewish schools must also serve in the systematic preparation for future occupations. With regard to preparation for emigration, particularly to Palestine, emphasis will be placed on guidance toward manual work and the study of the Hebrew language. The education and vocational training of girls must be directed to preparing them to carry out their responsibilities as upholders of the family and mothers of the next generation.

An independent cultures structure must offer possibilities of employment to Jews who are artistically and culturally creative, and serve the separate cultural life of the Jews in Germany.

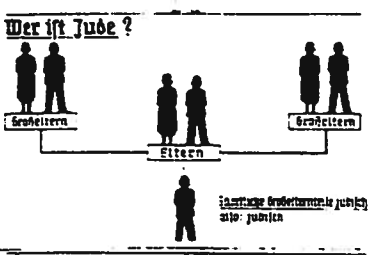
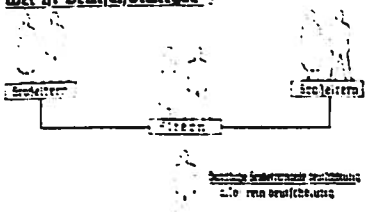
2. The increased need for emigration will be served by large-scale planning, firstly with respect to Palestine, but also to all other available countries, with particular attention to young people. This includes study of additional possibilities for emigration, training in professions suited for emigrants, particularly agriculture and technical skills; the creation of ways and means to mobilize and liquidate



Das Gesetz unterscheidet :



Wer ist Deutschblütiger ?
Wer ist Jude ?
Wer ist Mischling 1. Grades ?
Wer ist Mischling 2. Grades ?



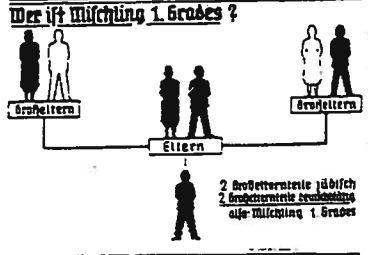
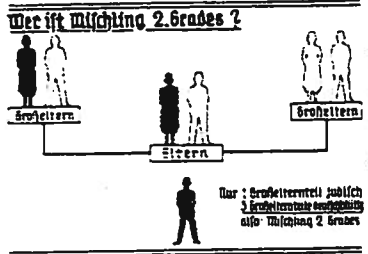
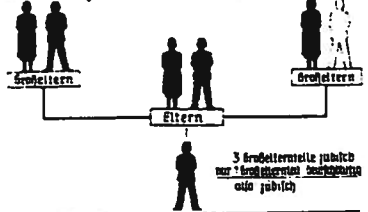
Als Jude gilt auch:
ein Mischling, der der jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft angehört.

Als Jude gilt auch:
ein Mischling, der mit einem Juden verheiratet ist. Kinder werden Juden.

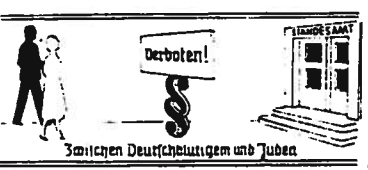
Als Jude gilt auch:
ein Mischling, der aus einer Ehe mit einem Juden stammt, die nach dem 17.9.1935 geschlossen ist.

Als Jude gilt auch:
ein Mischling, der aus verbotenen außerehelichen Verkehr mit einem Juden stammt und der nach dem 31.7.1936 außerehelich geboren ist.

Ebenfalls zur jüdischen Rasse gehörig :



Welche Eheschließungen sind verboten ?
Es ist zu beachten, daß bereits bestehende Ehen unberührt bleiben. Als Rassen deren Blut dem deutschen Blut nicht verwandt ist, gelten 1) 8 auch Träger (Teil +) und 2) Japane...



A chart used to distinguish Jews from *Mischlinge* (Germans of mixed blood) and Aryans for purposes of the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor." The white figures represent Aryans; the black figures represent Jews; and shaded figures represent *Mischlinge*. 1935. Stadtarchiv Bielefeld.

the property of persons who are economically independent; the broadening of existing means of transferring property and the creation of additional such means.

3. Support and care of the needy, sick or aged must be assured through further systematic expansion of the Jewish welfare services provided by the communities to supplement government social services.
4. An impoverished community cannot carry out these varied and difficult tasks. The *Reichsvertretung* will try by every means to safeguard the economic position of the Jews by seeking to protect the existing means of livelihood. Those who are economically weak will be assisted by the further development of economic aids as employment bureaus, economic advice, and personal or mortgage loans.
5. We are given strength in the present and hope for the future by the vitality of the progress in the construction of Jewish Palestine. In order to draw the Jews of Germany even more closely into this development, the *Reichsvertretung* itself has joined the Palestine Foundation Fund [*Keren Ha-Yesod*] and appeals warmly to Jewish communities and organizations to

follow its example. The *Reichsvertretung* offers its services to establish organizational links between the institutions of the Jews in Germany and the work of reconstruction in Palestine.

In full awareness of the magnitude of the responsibilities involved and the difficulties of the task, the *Reichsvertretung* calls on Jewish men and women, and on all Jewish youth, to join together in unity, to maintain high Jewish morale, to practice strict self-discipline, and show a maximum willingness to make sacrifice.

II

In accordance with a proposal made in the presidium of the *Reichsvertretung*, the *Reichsvertretung*, the state Federations and the communities are requested to cooperate closely in taking such organizational and personnel measures as are required in these Jewish bodies in order to ensure the vigorous and systematic carrying out of the new working program by all Jewish official bodies.

(Source: *Judische Rundschau*, No. 77, September 24, 1935.)





**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

**German Jewish Response
to the Nuremberg Laws**

(September 24, 1935)

The *Reichsvertretung* der Juden in Deutschland* announces the following:

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"The Laws decided upon by the Reichstag in Nuremberg have come as the heaviest of blows for the Jews in Germany. But they must create a basis on which a tolerable relationship becomes possible between the German and the Jewish people. The *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* is willing to contribute to this end with all its powers. A precondition for such a tolerable relationship is the hope that the Jews and Jewish communities of Germany will be enabled to keep a moral and economic means of existence by the halting of defamation and boycott.

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An independent cultural structure must offer possibilities of employment to Jews who are artistically and culturally creative, and serve the separate cultural life of the Jews in Germany.

2. The *increased need* for emigration will be served by large-scale planning, firstly with respect to *Palestine*, but also to all other available countries, with particular attention to young people. This includes study of additional possibilities for emigration, *training* in professions suited for emigrants, particularly agriculture and technical skills; the creation of ways and means to mobilize and liquidate the property of persons who are economically independent, the broadening of existing means of transferring property and the creation of additional such means.

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Juedische Rundschau, No. 77, September 24, 1935.

* *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* – National Representation of the Jews in Germany.

Source: Yad Vashem

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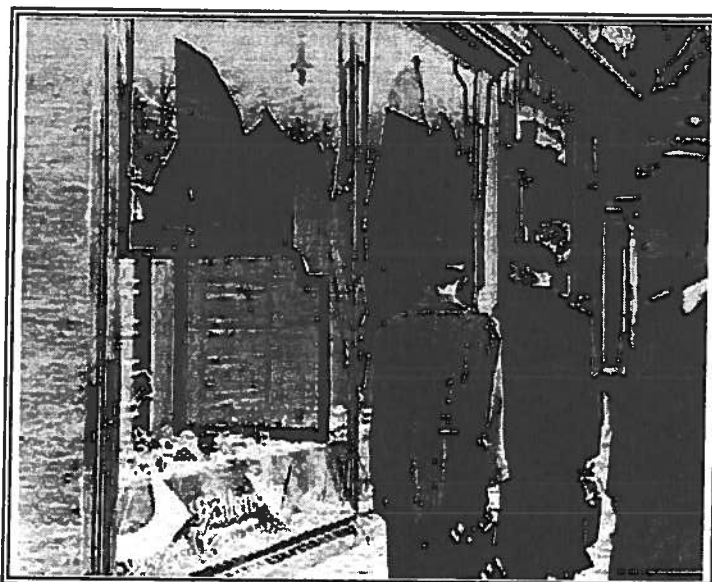
AICE

The Jewish Student Online Research Center (JSOURCE)

Kristallnacht

Almost immediately upon assuming the Chancellorship of Germany, Hitler began promulgating legal actions against Germany's Jews. In 1933, he proclaimed a one-day boycott against Jewish shops, a law was passed against kosher butchering and Jewish children began experiencing restrictions in public schools. By 1935, the Nuremberg Laws deprived Jews of German citizenship. By 1936, Jews were prohibited from participation in parliamentary elections and signs reading "Jews Not Welcome" appeared in many German cities. (Incidentally, these signs were taken down in the late summer in preparation for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin).

In the first half of 1938, numerous laws were passed restricting Jewish economic activity and occupational opportunities. In July, 1938, a law was passed (effective January 1, 1939) requiring all Jews to carry identification cards. On October 28, 17,000 Jews of Polish citizenship, many of whom had been living in Germany for decades, were arrested and relocated across the Polish border. The Polish government refused to admit them so they were interned in "relocation camps" on the Polish frontier.



Germans pass broken window of Jewish-owned shop (USHMM Photo).

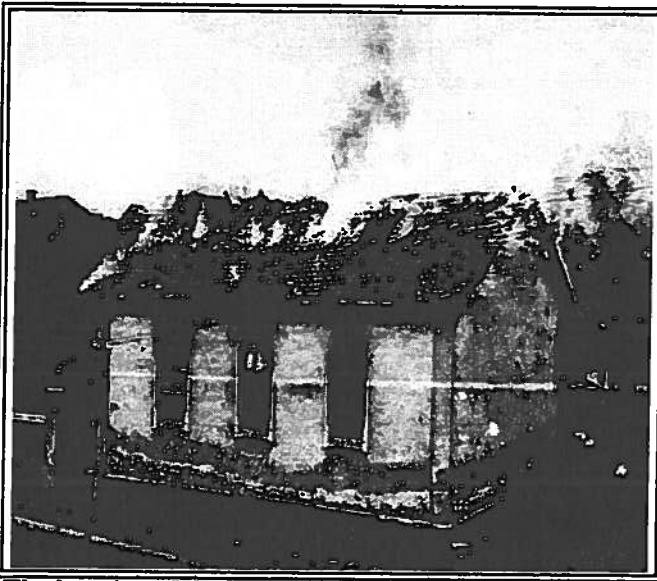
Among the deportees was Zindel Grynszpan, who had been born in western Poland and had moved to Hanover, where he established a small store, in 1911. On the night of October 27, Zindel Grynszpan and his family were forced out of their home by German police. His store and the family's possessions were confiscated and they were forced to move over the Polish border.

Zindel Grynszpan's seventeen-year-old son, Herschel, was living with an uncle in Paris. When he received news of his family's expulsion, he went to the German embassy in Paris on November 7, intending to assassinate the German Ambassador to France. Upon discovering that the Ambassador was not in the embassy, he settled for a lesser official, Third Secretary Ernst vom Rath. Rath, was critically wounded and died two days later, on November 9.

The assassination provided Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Chief of Propaganda, with the excuse he needed to launch a pogrom against German Jews. Grynszpan's attack was interpreted by Goebbels as a conspiratorial attack by "International Jewry" against the Reich and, symbolically, against the Fuehrer himself. This pogrom has come to be called *Kristallnacht*, "the Night of Broken Glass."

On the nights of November 9 and 10, rampaging mobs throughout Germany and the newly acquired territories of Austria and Sudetenland freely attacked Jews in the street, in their homes and at their places of work and worship. At least 96 Jews were killed and hundreds more injured, more than 1,000 synagogues were burned (and possibly as many as 2,000), almost 7,500 Jewish businesses were destroyed, cemeteries and schools were vandalized, and 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps [added by Mitchell Bard from his book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to World War II*. NY: MacMillan, 1998, pp. 59-60].

The official German position on these events, which were clearly orchestrated by Goebbels, was that they were spontaneous outbursts. The Fuehrer, Goebbels reported to Party officials in Munich, "has decided that such demonstrations are not to be prepared or organized by the party, but so far as they originate spontaneously, they are not to be discouraged either." (Conot, Robert E. *Justice At Nuremberg*. NY: Harper & Row, 1983:165)



The burning of the synagogue in Ober Ramstadt (USHMM Photo).

Three days later, on November 12, Hermann Goering called a meeting of the top Nazi leadership to assess the damage done during the night and place responsibility for it. Present at the meeting were Goering, Goebbels, Reinhard Heydrich, Walter Funk and other ranking Nazi officials. The intent of this meeting was two-fold: to make the Jews responsible for *Kristallnacht* and to use the events of the preceding days as a rationale for

promulgating a series of antisemitic laws which would, in effect, remove Jews from the German economy. An interpretive transcript of this meeting is provided by Robert Conot, Justice at Nuremberg, New York: Harper and Row, 1983:164-172):

'Gentlemen! Today's meeting is of a decisive nature,' Goering announced. 'I have received a letter written on the Fuehrer's orders requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another.'

'Since the problem is mainly an economic one, it is from the economic angle it shall have to be tackled. Because, gentlemen, I have had enough of these demonstrations! They don't harm the Jew but me, who is the final authority for coordinating the German economy. 'If today a Jewish shop is destroyed, if goods are thrown into the street, the insurance companies will pay for the damages; and, furthermore, consumer goods belonging to the people are destroyed. If in the future, demonstrations which are necessary occur, then, I pray, that they be directed so as not to hurt us.

'Because it's insane to clean out and burn a Jewish warehouse, then have a German insurance company make good the loss. And the goods which I need desperately, whole bales of clothing and whatnot, are being burned. And I miss them everywhere. I may as well burn the raw materials before they arrive.

'I should not want to leave any doubt, gentlemen, as to the aim of today's meeting. We have not come together merely to talk again, but to make decisions, and I implore competent agencies to take all measures for the elimination of the Jew from the German economy, and to submit them to me.'

It was decided at the meeting that, since Jews were to blame for these events, they be held legally and financially responsible for the damages incurred by the pogrom. Accordingly, a "fine of 1 billion marks was levied for the slaying of Vom Rath, and 6 million marks paid by insurance companies for broken windows was to be given to the state coffers. (Snyder, Louis L. *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*. New York: Paragon House, 1989:201).

Kristallnacht turns out to be a crucial turning point in German policy regarding the Jews and may be considered as the **actual beginning of what is now called the Holocaust**.

1. By now it is clear to Hitler and his top advisors that forced immigration of Jews out of the Reich is not a feasible option.
2. Hitler is already considering the invasion of Poland.
3. Numerous concentration camps and forced labor camps are already in operation.
4. The Nuremberg Laws are in place.

5. The doctrine of *lebensraum* has emerged as a guiding principle of Hitler's ideology. And,
6. The passivity of the German people in the face of the events of *Kristallnacht* made it clear that the Nazis would encounter little opposition—even from the German churches.

Following the meeting, a wide-ranging set of antisemitic laws were passed which had the clear intent, in Goering's words, of "Aryanizing" the German economy. Over the next two or three months, the following measures were put into effect (cf., Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945*. NY: Cambridge, 1991:92-96):

1. Jews were required to turn over all precious metals to the government.
2. Pensions for Jews dismissed from civil service jobs were arbitrarily reduced.
3. Jewish-owned bonds, stocks, jewelry and art works can be alienated only to the German state.
4. Jews were physically segregated within German towns.
5. A ban on the Jewish ownership of carrier pigeons.
6. The suspension of Jewish driver's licenses.
7. The confiscation of Jewish-owned radios.
8. A curfew to keep Jews off the streets between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. in the summer and 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the winter.
9. Laws protecting tenants were made non-applicable to Jewish tenants.
10. [Perhaps to help insure the Jews could not fight back in the future, the Minister of the Interior issued regulations against Jews' possession of weapons on November 11. This prohibited Jews from "acquiring, possessing, and carrying firearms and ammunition, as well as truncheons or stabbing weapons. Those now possessing weapons and ammunition are at once to turn them over to the local police authority."]

One final note on the November 12 meeting is of critical importance. In the meeting, Goering announced, "I have received a letter written on the Fuehrer's orders requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another." The path to the "Final Solution" has now been chosen. And, all the bureaucratic mechanisms for its implementation were now in place.

It should be noted that there is some controversy among Holocaust scholars as to the origin, intent and appropriateness of the term *Kristallnacht*. The term, after all, was coined by Walter Funk at the November 12 Nazi

meeting following the pogrom of November 8-10. The crucial question is whether the term was a Nazi euphemism for an all-out pogrom against German Jews and whether the Nazis used the term in a derisive manner. There is considerable evidence that both of the above questions have an affirmative answer.

Holocaust, and *Kristallnacht* survivor, Ernest Heppner made the following observation in a recent (June, 1995) exchange of ideas on the Internet Holocaust Discussion List:

...as an eyewitness I was very emotionally involved in this event and its consequences. Like everyone else here in the United States, for some 50 years I called those horrible days and nights Kristallnacht. I changed my mind reluctantly when, during my research, I discovered Goering's intent to use this designation to ridicule this event.

The following sources should be of interest to the subscribers of this list.

"*Die Juden in Deutschland 1933-1945*," herausgegeben von Wolfgang Benz, Verlag C.H. Beck, Munich 1989, part VI, pages 499-544, *Der November- pogrom 1938*. The second sentence of this chapter begins: "*Der November- pogrom, als 'Reichkristallnacht' im Umgangstonverniedlicht...*" (The November pogrom was "prettified" in the vernacular as crystal night.)

Chapter 6, titled "*Die 'Kristallnacht' als Anfang vom Ende*:", (crystal night as the beginning of the end) starts: "*Man kann den November- pogrom als ein Ritual oeffentlicher Demuetung deuten...*" (The November pogrom can be explained as a ritual for public humiliation...) The photograph accompanying this chapter is titled: "*Vielleicht gab das zersplitterte Glass Anlass zu dem 'Spottnamen Reichskristallnacht.'*" (Perhaps the broken glass was used to ridicule the pogrom).

Also see Arnold Paucker's "The Jews in Germany," Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986, page 220: "*Der Novemberpogrom, euphemistisch 'Kristallnacht' genannt, war der Anfang vom Ende...*" (The November pogrom, euphemistically named "Crystal Night" was the beginning of the end.)

There are additional sources, but I hope the above will serve to illustrate the fact that, except for the United States, The November Pogrom appears to be the established term.

Walter Pehle makes the following observation:

It is clear that the term Crystal Night serves to foster a vicious minimalizing of its memory, a discounting of grave reality: such cynical appellations function to reinterpret manslaughter and murder, arson, robbery, plunder, and massive property damage, transforming these into a glistening event marked by sparkle and gleam. Of course, such terms reveal one thing in

stark clarity - the lack of any sense of involvement or feeling of sympathy on the part of those who had stuck their heads in the sand before that violent night.

With good reason, knowledgeable commentators urge people to renounce the continued use of "Kristallnacht" and "Reichskristall- nacht" to refer to these events, even if the expressions have become slick and established usage in our language. (Pehle, W. H., 'Editor's Preface' in Pehle, W. H. (ed.) November 1938, From *Reichskristall nacht* to *Genocide*, Berg Publishers Inc., NY, 1991, pp. vii-viii (English edition))

So, it appears, the term "Kristallnacht" or "Crystal Night" was invented by Nazis to mock Jews on that black November night in 1938. It is, therefore, another example of Nazi perversion. There are numerous other examples of this same tendency in the language of the Nazi perpetrators: *Sonderbehandlung* ("special treatment") for gassing victims, Euthanasie for a policy of mass murder of retarded or physically handicapped patients, *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work Makes you Free) over the entrance to Auschwitz. When the Nazis launched their plan to annihilate the remaining Jews in Poland in the fall of 1943, they called it "Erntefest," or Harvest Festival. While this may have been a code word, as Froma Zeitlin has observed, it had the same grim and terrible irony that is reflected in *Kristallnacht* as in so many other instances of the perverted uses of language in the Third Reich. Perhaps most cynical of all is the use of the term, "Endloesung der Judenfrage" (Final Solution of the Jewish Question), for what is now known as the Holocaust. Goebbels frequently used such terminology to amuse his audiences (usually other Nazi officials) and to further demoralize his victims.

On the other side of this controversy are those who argue that the term should be retained. In the first place, it is the term which has been used now for fifty years and connotes significant meaning to those who study the Holocaust. As Froma Zeitlin (in a message posted to HOLOCAUS Internet Discussion Group in June, 1995) observes:

But I would like to point out that whether or not the name came into existence as a Nazi euphemism or not, the event itself and what it has come to signify has transformed an 'innocent' name into one of unforgettable and dramatic meaning. The term is permanently out of circulation for any other use whatsoever. Can you imagine us now using 'Kristallnacht' to refer to some street riot or another, no matter how extensively the streets were littered with broken glass? Certainly not. Moreover, what disturbed the German populace was less the sight of synagogues burning (fires take place all the time, after all -- it depends on the scale) than of the savage and wasteful vandalism that confronted bystanders everywhere, disrupting the clean and orderly streets (to say nothing of consumer convenience). What was indeed memorable was the sheer quantity of broken glass. A third point was the economic outcome of this massive breakage. Germany didn't produce enough plate glass to repair the damages (synagogues did not have to be replaced -- quite the contrary). The result was twofold: the need to import glass from Belgium (for sorely needed cash) and the outrage of indemnifying the Jewish

community to pay for the damages. So the broken glass came to assume yet another outrageous dimension in the wake of the event.

Paul Lawrence Rose, Penn State University, agrees with the retention of the term "Kristallnacht" instead of "pogrom" or some other term and makes the following observation:

Of course, K-nacht was a pogrom of sorts, but it was a German event and more specifically still, a Nazi event. Replacing it with pogrom certainly sets it in the larger context of anti-Semitic massacres in European history, but it loses the German and Nazi contexts.

And, as Zeitlin observes, the origins of terms do not equal the historical meanings that they accumulate. To have criticized Goering's use of language in 1938 would have been appropriate; however, 1996 the term *kristallnacht* carries the significance and power it has acquired over the past fifty years.

Source: The Holocaust/Shoah Page.

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*Witness to the Holocaust. Michael Berenbaum. Harper Collins
New Yorks. 1997*

- Rubble of ruined synagogues had to be cleared by the community. Jewish compensation claims were confiscated by the Reich and Jewish property owners were forced to repair their own property.
- Jews of German nationality could not file for damages.
- A collective fine of one billion reichsmarks (\$400,000,000) was imposed on the Jewish community.

On November 15, Jews were barred from schools. Two weeks later, authorities were given the right to impose a curfew. By December, Jews were denied access to most public places.

The November pogroms were the last occasion for street violence against Jews in Germany. While Jews could thereafter leave their homes without fear of attack, a lethal process of destruction that was more effective and more virulent was set in place.

In the readings that follow, we shall see depictions of the event that triggered Kristallnacht—the expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany and their transfer to no-man's-land in Zbyngyn on the Polish-German border where they could neither leave Germany nor enter Poland—in telegrams to the American secretary of state. We shall also read the detailed instructions given to the police by Deputy Chief of the Gestapo Reinhard Heydrich, and the minutes of the November 12 meeting where the impact of the November pogroms was discussed and a policy formulated for the elimination of Jews from German society.

TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY OF STATE

OCTOBER 28, 1938

TELEGRAM RECEIVED
GRAY,
BERLIN
FROM:
DATED OCTOBER 28, 1938
REC'D 5:22 P.M.
SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON.
578, OCTOBER 28, 8 P.M.

During the course of the day the German police authorities have rounded up a large number of Polish JEWS and are issuing orders for their expulsion to Poland. This has taken place in Berlin and we understand in other big cities

in the Reich. As far as we can ascertain only male Polish JEWS have been arrested and none up to this time have actually been sent over the Polish border. We understand that the grounds for the action are a recent Polish decree to the effect that no Polish citizen may reenter Poland after October 30th unless his passport has previously been validated by a Polish consulate or diplomatic mission.

The Polish embassy states that it is negotiating with the Germans in an endeavor to get them to rescind the expulsion orders. American correspondents report: the explanation of the German officials is that the Polish decree produced the probability of Germany having sev-



eral thousand foreigners without nationality (*staatenlos*) who after October 30th could not (repeat not) be deported. The Polish embassy sometime ago informally estimated that there were 50,000 Polish JEWS in Germany proper

and 5,000 in Austria. More specific information should be available tomorrow.

Repeated to Warsaw and London for Rublee.

WILSON

TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY OF STATE

OCTOBER 29, 1938

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY,

BERLIN

FROM:

DATED OCTOBER 28, 1938

REC'D 5:22 P.M.

SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON.

582, OCTOBER 29, 3 P.M.

REFERRING TO THE EMBASSY'S 578,

OCTOBER 28, 8 P.M.

Geist was officially informed today at German police headquarters that on October 6 the Polish government issued a decree by virtue of which all passports of Polish JEWS

abroad became invalid on October 29. German authorities state they are convinced this decree was shortly to be followed by another expatriating all such persons. To prevent these thousands of Polish JEWS from becoming stateless and undeportable the German authorities are expelling all Polish male JEWS and expect to finish the deportations by tonight. Women and children are not included, it being assumed they will follow voluntarily their male relatives. Police have assured us that they are not deporting Polish Jews holding American immigration visas.

Repeated to Warsaw and London for Rublee.

RR WILSON

LETTER FROM HERSCHEL GRYNSZPAN

You have undoubtedly heard of our great misfortune. I will give you a description of what happened.

On Thursday night there were rumors circulating that all Polish Jews of a certain city had been expelled. However, we refused to believe them. On Thursday night at 9:00 P.M., a Schupo [local policeman] came to our house and told us we had to go to the police headquarters with our passports. We went just as we were, all together, to the police headquarters, accompanied by the Schupo. There we found almost our entire neighborhood already

assembled. A police wagon then took us at once to the *Rathaus* [town hall]. Everyone was taken there. We had not yet been told what it was about, but we quickly realized that it was the end for us. An expulsion order was thrust into our hands. We had to leave Germany before October 29 (Saturday). We were not allowed to return to our homes. I begged to be allowed to return home to get at least a few essential things. So I left with a Schupo accompanying me and I packed a valise with the most necessary clothes. That is all I could save. We don't have a cent.



Mug shot of Herschel Grynszpan (1921-?) after his arrest for the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris. November 14, 1938. Yad Vashem.

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REINHARD HEYDRICH'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEASURES AGAINST JEWS

NOVEMBER 10, 1938

SECRET

COPY OF MOST URGENT TELEGRAM FROM MUNICH,
OF NOVEMBER 10, 1938, 1:20 A.M.

TO:

ALL HEADQUARTERS AND STATIONS OF THE STATE
POLICE

ALL DISTRICTS AND SUB DISTRICTS OF THE SD
URGENT! FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE CHIEF
OR HIS DEPUTY!

RE: MEASURES AGAINST JEWS TONIGHT

Following the attempt on the life of Secretary of the Legation vom Rath in Paris, demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in all parts of the Reich in the course of the coming night, November 9/10, 1938. The instructions below are to be applied in dealing with these events:

I. The chiefs of the State Police, or their deputies, must immediately upon receipt of this telegram contact, by telephone, the political leaders in their areas—Gauleiter [regional party leader] or Kreisleiter [district party leader]—who have jurisdiction in their districts and arrange a joint meeting with the inspector or commander of the Order Police to discuss the arrangements for the demonstrations. At these discussions the political leaders will be informed that the German Police has received instructions, detailed below, from the Reichsführer SS and the chief of the German Police, with which the political leadership is requested to coordinate its own measures:

A. Only such measures are to be taken as do not endanger German lives or property (i.e., synagogues are to be burnt down only where there is no danger of fire in neighboring buildings).

B. Places of business and apartments belonging to Jews may be destroyed but not looted. The police are instructed to supervise the observance of this order and to arrest looters.

C. In commercial streets particular care is to be taken that non-Jewish businesses are completely protected against damage.

D. Foreign citizens—even if they are Jews—are not to be molested.

II. On the assumption that the guidelines detailed under paragraph I are observed, the demonstrations are not to be prevented by the police, who are only to supervise the observance of the guidelines.

III. On receipt of this telegram, police will seize all archives to be found in all synagogues and offices of the Jewish communities so as to prevent their destruction during the demonstrations. This refers only to material of historical value, not to contemporary tax records, etc. The archives are to be handed over to the locally responsible officers of the SD.

IV. The control of the measures of the Security Police concerning the demonstrations against the Jews is vested in the organs of the State Police, unless inspectors of the Security Police have given their own instructions. Officials of the Criminal Police, members of the SD, of the Reserves and the SS in general may be used to carry out the measures taken by the Security Police.

V. As soon as the course of events during the night permits the release of the officials required, as many Jews in all districts, especially the rich, as can be accommodated in existing prisons are to be arrested. For the time being only healthy male Jews, who are not too old, are to be detained. After the

detentions have been carried out the appropriate concentration camps are to be contacted immediately for the prompt accommodation of the Jews in the camps. Special care is to be taken that the Jews

arrested in accordance with these instructions are not ill-treated....

SIGNED HEYDRICH,
SS Gruppenführer

KRISTALLNACHT AT THE DINSLAKEN ORPHANAGE

REMINISCENCES*

Yitzhak S. Herz

Early one morning I was awakened by the shrill ringing of the door bell. With a sense of foreboding I opened the front door. Three men, two Gestapo officers and a policeman in mufti, entered announcing: "This is a police raid! We are looking for arms in all Jewish homes and apartments and so we shall search the orphanage too!" The three commenced their task at once. They searched only the ground floor, especially the small office and the children's workroom. In the office they cut the telephone wires and, searching for money, opened the lockers and drawers of the young students. Unobserved for a moment, the Gestapo officer Schneider whispered in my ear: "During the night all the Jewish men in Dinslaken were arrested. But there is no need for you to worry. Nothing will happen to you! You will remain in charge of the children." Schneider, I later found out, was a former Social Democrat and had

always been friendly to Jews. After the search which lasted for twenty-five minutes and which—as was to be expected—yielded no tangible results, the Nazi officers left the building and gave the following order: "Nobody is to leave the house before 10 A.M.! All the blinds of the building facing the street must be drawn! Shortly after 10 A.M. everything will be over!"

About one hour later, at 7 A.M., the morning service in the synagogue of the institution was scheduled to commence. Some people from the town usually participated, but this time nobody turned up. Only the teacher of the Jewish primary school and two Polish Jews, who escaped during the Polish action of October, attended the minyan. Then I heard the ringing of the house bell. The sound of the bell, which I hastened to answer, became louder and louder. When I opened the door a strange man faced me. In the dim light of the street lamp I recognized a Jewish face. In a few words the stranger explained to me: "I am the president of the Jewish community of Düsseldorf. I spent the night in the waiting room of the Gelsenkirchen railway station. I have only one request—let me take refuge in the orphanage for a short while. While I was traveling to Dinslaken I heard in the train that anti-Semitic riots had broken out everywhere,

* Written originally in German these reminiscences were based on daily notes made by the author in 1938 while at Dinslaken. In 1940, as a refugee in Australia, Mr. Herz submitted a manuscript describing his experiences in Nazi Germany to the Literary Prize Competition conducted by Harvard University Faculty, Cambridge, Massachusetts. His paper, which included this chapter on the Dinslaken Orphanage, was graded among the twenty best out of more than two hundred manuscripts.

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and that many Jews had been arrested. Synagogues everywhere are burning!"

With anxiety I listened to the man's story; suddenly he said with a trembling voice: "No, I won't come in! I can't be safe in your house! We are all lost!" With these words he disappeared into the dark fog which cast a veil over the morning. I never saw him again. In spite of this Job's message I forced myself not to show any sign of emotion. Only thus could I avoid a state of panic among the children and tutors. Nonetheless I was of the opinion that the young students should be prepared to brave the storm of the approaching catastrophe. About 7.30 A.M. I ordered forty-six people—among them thirty-two children—into the dining hall of the institution and told them the following in a simple and brief address:

As you know, last night a Herr vom Rath, a member of the German embassy in Paris, was assassinated. The Jews are held responsible for this murder. The tension in the political field is now being directed against the Jews, and during the next few hours there will certainly be anti-Semitic excesses. This will happen even in our town. It is my feeling and my impression that we German Jews have never experienced such calamities since the Middle Ages. Be strong! Trust in God! I am sure we will withstand even these hard times. Nobody will remain in the rooms of the upper floor of the building. The exit door to the street will be opened only by myself! From this moment on everyone is to heed my orders only!

After breakfast the pupils were sent to the large study hall of the institution. The teacher in charge tried to keep them busy.

At 9.30 A.M. the bell at the main gate rang persistently. I opened the door: about fifty men stormed into the house, many of them with their coat or jacket collars turned up. At first they rushed into the dining room, which fortunately was empty, and there they began their

work of destruction, which was carried out with the utmost precision. The frightened and fearful cries of the children resounded through the building. In a stentorian voice I shouted: "Children, go out into the street immediately." This advice was certainly contrary to the order of the Gestapo. I thought, however, that in the street, in a public place, we might be in less danger than inside the house. The children immediately ran down a small staircase at the back, most of them without hat or coat—despite the cold and wet weather. We tried to reach the next street crossing, which was close to Dinslaken's town hall, where I intended to ask for police protection. About ten policemen were stationed here, reason enough for a sensation-seeking mob to await the next development. This was not very long in coming; the senior police officer, Freihahn, shouted at us: "Jews do not get protection from us! Vacate the area together with your children as quickly as possible!" Freihahn then chased us back to a side street in the direction of the backyard of the orphanage. As I was unable to hand over the key of the back gate, the policeman drew his bayonet and forced open the door. I then said to Freihahn: "The best thing is to kill me and the children, then our ordeal will be over quickly!" The officer responded to my "suggestion" merely with cynical laughter. Freihahn then drove all of us to the wet lawn of the orphanage garden. He gave us strict orders not to leave the place under any circumstance.

Facing the back of the building, we were able to watch how everything in the house was being systematically destroyed under the supervision of the men of law and order—the police. At short intervals we could hear the crunching of glass or the hammering against wood as windows and doors were broken. Books, chairs, beds, tables, linen, chests, parts of a piano, a radiogram, and maps were thrown through apertures in the wall, which a short while ago had been windows or doors.

In the meantime the mob standing around the building had grown to several hundred. Among these people I recognized some familiar

faces, suppliers of the orphanage or tradespeople, who only a day or a week earlier had been happy to deal with us as customers. This time they were passive, watching the destruction without much emotion.

At 10.15 A.M. we heard the wailing of sirens! We noticed a heavy cloud of smoke billowing upward. It was obvious from the direction it was coming from that the Nazis had set the synagogue on fire. Very soon we saw smoke clouds rising up, mixed with sparks of fire. Later I noticed that some Jewish houses, close to the synagogue, had also been set alight under the expert guidance of the fire brigade. Its presence was a necessity, since the firemen had to save the homes of the non-Jewish neighborhood.

At 10.45 A.M. the police commissioner of the town approached me. He had an order—as he expressed it—to discuss the situation with me. The way he talked about the event did not leave the slightest doubt that he was disturbed and shocked. He asked me to accompany him through the orphanage. Meanwhile most of the Nazis had left the building. While we were walking from room to room the officer asked me about my future plans. I answered briefly that I wanted permission from the authorities to leave with the children for Belgium or Holland at the earliest opportunity. As we continued our “inspection,” trying to make our way over heaps of rubble and the broken staircase, a young fellow in brown trousers who was wearing a “civilian” jacket shouted at the police commissioner in a coarse voice: “What’s this bloody Jew doing near you?” Thereupon the “friendly” police officer gave me the order “to run as quickly as possible to the members of my race.” In this situation there was no alternative but to disappear and return to my charges.

In the meantime a large number of police officers had arrived in the backyard. They told me to prepare all the children, older students, and employees of the orphanage for a march to the center of Dinslaken. They held me responsible for getting them ready in the shortest possible time. The news of the *Judenparade* or *Judenzug* (this was the name they mockingly

gave it) spread like wildfire through the streets of the town. Three to four rows deep, the Germans filled the pavements of both sides of the street waiting for the procession. Most of them did not make any remarks; many faces revealed obvious disapproval, but even these people turned up for the “show.” The “parade” was led by two police officers and was flanked by Nazi Storm Troopers. The small children of the orphanage were forced into a wagon with a long shaft, which was pulled by four teenage boys from the orphanage. Suddenly, from a street corner police officer Freihahn shouted at the brown-shirted guards who marched with us: “Friends, what are you doing accompanying this *Judenzug*? They will and they must know themselves where their stable will be!” Both policemen immediately followed Freihahn’s advice and left the procession. They drove us on and pushed us into a schoolyard, close to Dinslaken’s synagogue. We were now able to see with our own eyes how a German fire brigade, whose task was to extinguish fires, was ordered to perform legalized arson. I could clearly see how members of the German fire brigade fanned the flames which were consuming the synagogue and Jewish community buildings, while others directed jets of water onto nearby houses belonging to non-Jews.

In the schoolyard we had to wait for some time. Several Jews, who had escaped the previous arrest and deportation to concentration camps, joined our gathering. Many of them, mostly women, were shabbily dressed. They told me that the brown hordes had driven them out of their homes, ordered them to leave everything behind and come at once, under Nazi guard, to the schoolyard. A Storm Trooper in charge commanded some bystanders to leave the schoolyard “since there is no point in even looking at such scum!”

In the meantime our “family” had increased to ninety, all of whom were placed in a small hall in the school. Nobody was allowed to leave the place. Men considered physically fit were called for duty. Only those over sixty—among them people of seventy-five years of age—were

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allowed to stay. Very soon we learned that the entire Jewish male population under sixty had already been transferred to the concentration camp at Dachau. During their initial waiting period, while still under police custody, the Jewish men had been allowed to buy their own food. This state of affairs, however, only lasted for a few hours.

I learned very soon from a policeman, who in his heart was still an anti-Nazi, that most of the Jewish men had been beaten up by members of the SA before being transported to Dachau. They were kicked, slapped in the face, and subjected to all sorts of humiliation. Many of those exposed to this type of ill-treatment had served in the German army during World War I. One of them, a Mr. Hugo B.C., had once worn with pride the Iron Cross First Class (the German equivalent of the Victoria Cross), that he had been awarded for bravery.

I myself was relatively fortunate. The leader of the "action" informed me that I was to be in charge of the Jews and responsible for order. Furthermore, he appointed me spokesman for all the Jews then in custody. My first job was to prepare a list of those who were in the school hall. This took quite a while. There were frequent interruptions. One woman fainted, another asked for water, a third complained of headaches. The old Jewish teacher, a pensioner, a real gentleman, once a city councilor and principal of a commercial school, was sitting moaning in a corner. His forehead was bleeding from a beating he had received from the Nazis. I found an old envelope, used it as a cup, and brought some water to the suffering old man. Unobserved for a moment, I had been able to steal this water from the tap in the corridor.

A sudden quiet! A Nazi in plainclothes and peaked cap had entered the hall. He was accompanied by a woman in her early forties, most unimpressive in her appearance. The representative of the party "took the floor."

People, now listen to me! Unknown elements are the culprits responsible for this morning's work of destruction. We must be

clear on this. Look! In Düsseldorf a German mother and German father are mourning over a promising son who was murdered by a Jew. You must understand this, people! This woman (pointing at the person accompanying him) is a German. That is already enough reason for her to be regarded as honest and honorable. She is here as a witness to assure you that not one Jew was harmed in the slightest degree.

People! There is no need to live in fear! We are not here in Soviet Russia! The old folks—if they want to—may be taken to the hospital. A physician will come very soon! If you are hungry put your money together—Jews always have plenty! Somebody may go to the shopping center and buy some food!

A few minutes later the representative of the Nazi Party made another announcement:

People! I want to tell you that the cow owned by the orphanage has been transferred to the stable of a German peasant. We ordered him to provide the animal with proper food, because animals should never suffer!

Meanwhile, a doctor had arrived. He treated the elderly with visible sympathy. They were treated for shock and some minor wounds which they had received due to the rough handling meted out by the Nazi rowdies. The afternoon passed quickly, however children and adults began to show signs of despair and depression. On the lips of everyone was a single question: "What will be next?" There were, however, a few small children who obviously did not grasp the gravity of the situation. Some of these—this was my impression—regarded the Nazi fete with a feeling of thrill.

At 6.30 P.M. the Nazi official who had been in charge in the morning "honored" us with another visit. This time he appeared in an elegant uniform. He gave the order that all Jews assembled and in custody were to get ready

immediately. We were to be marched off to another hall, which belonged to the owner of an inn. As in the morning the little children were seated on a wagon, which was pulled by four boys: "and all the others—male and female—are to march behind." It took about twenty minutes for the *Judenzug* to reach the other place. As was to be expected, huge crowds waited on both sides of the streets. Most of them were silent onlookers, and from their stern faces I could sense that they did not approve of this type of anti-Semitic demonstration.

We arrived at the building at about 7 P.M. It was normally used as a dance hall but this time it had been prepared for a different purpose. The floor was covered with straw and some cushions, which belonged to the orphanage. Above the stage hung a picture of Adolf Hitler, which had been covered with some cloth shortly before our arrival. The SA man in charge told me that in accordance with my request all prisoners would receive some macaroni with dried fruit, nicely prepared as their evening meal. "The Nazis," so he assured me, "did not put any poison into the food!" An hour later a police officer appeared with yet another order, namely that all boys over fifteen and the Jewish men (mostly invalids of World War I) were to sleep somewhere else. He informed me that the stable of the Jew L. had been chosen as a suitable accommodation for the men and boys, and there they were led.

About 10 P.M. *Feierabend* [the end of the workday] was ordered. All lights were turned off, except those at the two exits. In the hall between the children and women there stood about forty SA and SS men, all of them armed with pistols. Those who took positions along the walls looked like horrible monsters, frightening their Jewish captives. I had to do something to calm the children, who were put in one row against the wall. In a whisper I told them to recite the night prayer with me in a chorus.

I must admit it was a dramatic moment, fraught with religious emotion. Even these

coarse Germans in uniform must have been touched for some seconds when they heard the children's voices ringing out in the darkness. Suddenly, the Nazis retreated one by one and left our "protection" to a policeman and a brown-shirted Storm Trooper. Despite repeated assurances from the guard, supported by "words of honor" that nothing would happen, it took a long time for the grown-ups to fall asleep. I myself remained awake and tried to observe our "protectors." I was reminded of the protagonist in Heinrich Heine's *Der Rabbi von Bacharach* and his remark to his wife Sara, while both were walking along the *Judengasse* in Frankfurt: "How badly protected is Israel! False friends guard them from the outside and, their protectors within are guardians of foolishness and fright!" At about three o'clock in the morning three people were driven to the hospital by ambulance. Then silence returned. You could hear only the monotonous steps of the guard walking back and forth. It was night; officially "rest" was declared—and guarded. Tranquillity?—there was none. Nobody really slept.

The next day (November 11) a representative of Dinslaken's town clerk introduced himself as the newly-appointed commissar whose job it was to regulate the food supply for the Jews. He was the prototype of a German public servant, who took his new task extremely seriously. He immediately informed me, that "they" had found 13,250 reichsmarks in the office of the orphanage, and he was ordered to account for each penny to me. There was not the slightest doubt that the man, indeed, meant well. But this type of correctness, when you were forced to make your way over heaps of destruction carried out by vandals, could not convince or deceive me. While I was talking to the man my pupil Arno Bergmann brought me a German twenty-mark note he had found in a heap of debris in a corner of the former office. And yet the Nazi continued to speak of correct book-keeping.

They gave us permission to do some cooking in the semidestroyed kitchen of the orphan-

age. The oven and the water pipe were still in order although the rooms, hall, and the staircase of the house were in shambles. As already indicated above, the German vandals carried out their mission of destruction with skillful efficiency. Preserved fruits in jars were used by the Nazis as projectiles and were flung against the walls and doors of the kitchen. Yet it was amazing how quickly we got used to the new situation which had been forced on us.

Some police officers, when they felt safe, i.e., when SA men were not in sight, talked freely to me about the gruesome event. Apologizing profusely they declared that they had nothing to do with these crimes and misdeeds, but as policemen had to fulfill the orders of their superiors. Another member of the police force confided his secret to me, that during the night of November 10, at about four o'clock, he was ordered to come immediately to the Dinslaken town hall to participate in a most important "action." The same officer told me a few hours later that: "Our order for the 10th of November was to leave the streets of Dinslaken completely in the hands of the Nazi Storm Troopers." The police were to appear in streets and public places only at 4 P.M., by which time the "action" would be over.

November 12 (Shabbat). After the so-called breakfast one of my pupils approached me. He wanted to tell me something, but only on condition that I keep it a secret. The boy commenced: "As you know, last night we slept in a horse stable. Suddenly, during the night, an SA man, completely drunk, entered the stable. Although we were under the protection of a police guard, we were forced to listen to the utterances of this brownshirt and to obey his orders. Under his command we were forced to do exercises for nearly an hour. At the end of this type of training we had to sing one stanza of the 'Horst Wessel' song, the anthem of the Nazi Movement." Thus ran the boy's story. As usually happens in such situations someone who was involved in this episode learned that I had been informed of it. The man begged me not to inform the authorities of this "illegal"

incident, which in any case was totally "harmless," as he put it. It had never been my intention to report the misbehavior of one Nazi to another Nazi of a higher rank.

At about 10.30 A.M. I asked two teenagers to follow me. Although we were officially in custody we managed to reach the backyard of the orphanage. It was a foggy morning. The grass was wet and the small lanes very muddy. Why did I ask the two boys to follow me? During the "action" of November 10, I had noticed that the Nazis had thrown all the books, most of them religious, as well as the Torah scroll of the orphanage out of the window. Very shortly after reaching the backyard we discovered the holy scroll on the ground covered with mud and dirt. I still remember that very close to it I noticed Mandelkern's *Concordance* in a new "resting place." But not for long! Without much explanation the boys got hold of the garden tools, dug a deep hole, and buried the scroll. They quickly filled the "grave" with soil. While the boys were working, it was my job to look out for the "enemy." Thank God our plan was executed without incident, and we returned to our hall.

At about seven o'clock in the morning of November 13 a policeman came to our small internment camp and asked me to come to the orphanage at once. He told me that since the official attack on November 10 all the rooms of the building had been guarded day and night to prevent looting. It was a fact that heaps of clothing and linen were still buried under dirt and broken glass. In a voice which revealed his utter despair, the man said to me: "Mr. Tutor, to have put us on guard here was completely senseless. Last night the leader of the local NSDAP [Nazi Party] came to the orphanage with two big trucks, and brownshirts loaded all those goods and chattels which we policemen were supposed to protect onto the vehicles. Before they left they even forced open the safe, then went to the cellar of the house and emptied the contents of about forty bottles of wine, which they found in one case." I replied to the police officer that it was very nice of him to

trust me, although I was a Jew and was more or less kept under arrest by the very same people whom he accused of all these misdeeds. I added, candidly speaking, that under the prevailing conditions it would be absurd to make any complaints; complain to whom and against whom? This question the policeman might ask and answer by himself.

At about 11 A.M. on the same day, a car stopped in front of our hall. A well-dressed woman got out. With tears in her eyes, crying and moaning, she ran toward the entrance of our building. Suddenly she shouted: "My husband is dead! After being tortured by the Gestapo he died in one of the prison cells near the border!" Whereupon a policeman remarked: "You mean forced to die!" (*getotet Borden*). The woman continued: "Yes! My husband must be buried here! I hope it's possible." The policeman next to me could not give any advice. We succeeded, however, in obtaining permission to arrange the burial at the local Jewish cemetery, but no one was allowed to attend the funeral itself.

I had hoped that with this incident the exciting events of the day would be over. But since it was still only midday the rest of November 13 might still hold in store some surprises. They came in the early afternoon, when the commissioner of police appeared in the hall and commanded me to come to the orphanage immediately. The local leader of the Nazi Party wanted all the keys to the building, and insisted that I hand them over personally. I was prepared for an unpleasant scene, full of tension and threats which might, perhaps, end with my being sent to a concentration camp.

We reached the former dining room of the building. About forty policemen, SS and SA officials, all of them in uniform, took up positions along the walls of the room; the wall with the windows faced the backyard. The leader of the district, a former assistant teacher at a primary school, was a lanky man with a stern expression on his face. When I came closer to him he snatched the keys from my right hand and loudly ordered me to leave the room and wait

in the yard. In the backyard I turned my face to the wall and the broken windows of the dining room. I also noticed with shock that from every corner of the yard and house Nazis were staring at me. I neither lost my composure nor did I tremble. I must admit that I never was the heroic type. Although my position was quite hopeless I knew my weapon. Gangsters of the Nazi type are impressed to a certain degree if you do not show fear. It is always a good thing to answer the questions of coarse and brutal people evasively, but without hesitation. Religious strength often may help to conquer fear. From an open window the district leader of "Lower Rhine" (*Niederrhein*) leveled two accusations against me: that I had removed the Torah scroll and had complained about the way I was being treated. I denied both charges and towards evening I was allowed to return to the inn.

In the evening an SA man asked me to come to the front room of the tavern and to answer the telephone calls from abroad. Relatives and friends of the children were phoning—from Holland, Belgium, Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, and other places. All of them wanted to find out how the children were and what had become of them. One Nazi at the table shouted anti-Semitic remarks through the room, but was quickly "reprimanded" by someone else, who told him: "The Jews are human beings like ourselves!"

November 14: No special events or incidents.

November 15: The police informed me that the Jews must return again to their houses or apartments. By 4 P.M. the hall of the inn was to be cleared and made spick-and-span again. Naturally, we were responsible for keeping it clean. Dinslaken's sports association needed the place for the evening's boxing match! It was left to me to make the necessary accommodations—a very hard task, because most of the Jewish homes had been destroyed. I advised the people that for the time being they should live in groups in any rooms which they considered still habitable. I myself "squatted" in the villa of the above-mentioned war veteran (Iron Cross First Class). I now found out that he had been

given "accommodation" in a concentration camp. In the house practically everything had been destroyed, including the kitchen and the bathroom. Through the windows came the blast of an icy north wind. The floors were covered with rubble. I asked some of the boys to clear up two rooms and to find some cardboard with which to fill up the holes in the windows. Our food reserve had reached a dangerously low level. Before we left for our new quarters, two district leaders of the Nazi Party had prohibited the storekeepers from selling us food or doing us any favors. Furthermore, he ordered that the "junk" we still had (some pots, bags of food, cushions, brooms, etc.) was to be carried by the children. Thus burdened with the remaining belongings of the orphanage, we were forced to march through Dinslaken's main street, and this—as was to be expected—during the peak shopping hours.

The police were ordered to withdraw their men from the villa. Upon being given this information I organized the boys into a "homeguard" of our own. While the younger ones and the older girls were "asleep" we walked around the house throughout the whole night. Although I was aware that in an emergency this protection would have been useless, it gave me a sense of moral satisfaction to do guard duty with the boys.

While we made the rounds I discussed our immediate future with the boys; in other words what to do the next morning? I realized that it was impossible to continue this gypsy life for another day. We were even worse off than Gypsies. They would have been allowed to obtain food, but the Nazis denied this basic right to the Jewish children. "Yes, I must act; I must act immediately," I said to myself time and again. This house, which had once been an elegant villa, was now cold, dirty, wet, and windy. The two toilets were destroyed, and so was the shower and the bathtub. Many parts of the railing on the staircase had been ripped off.

It entered my mind that, in spite of the riots and devastation, there was a slim chance that one of the offices of the Jewish community in

Cologne might still be functioning. I went to Dinslaken Post Office and spoke with the director, an elderly gentleman, who not only made the telephone connection for me, but also expressed his disgust with the action of November 10 against the Jews and with the many wrongs perpetrated by the new regime in the name of the German nation.

The person in charge of the remnants of the Jewish community in Cologne advised me to make the arrangements to transfer the children and the remaining members of the staff to the Rhenish metropolis. The next day was *Buss- und Bettag*, an official "Day of Repentance" in Prussia. It was a gray and foggy day. A truck brought the youngsters to Cologne, while I and some boys stayed behind until the empty truck had returned from its seventy kilometer journey. I went to the police and reported the departure of the residents of the former Jewish orphanage to Cologne. I did not fail to notice that in a corner of the magistrate's office silver and many other valuables of the orphanage had been "secured" in large boxes. At about 6 P.M. the truck returned, and with the assistance of the driver I was able to load the vehicle with the few meager bits and pieces which we were allowed to take with us. It was an open truck. I sat in the back surrounded by brooms, buckets, pots, and pans. It was about 8 P.M. when we reached Duisburg. The fog changed to a fine drizzle, but the streets of the big city were filled with people going to the movie theaters, concerts, and cafés. I do not think they were much worried about a Jew, sitting among brooms, who had been driven out of one town, was trying to reach a safe haven, and was not sure whether he would be accepted for any length of time anywhere.

By 1.30 A.M. our truck had arrived in Cologne, and it stopped in front of the Jewish Apprentice Home in old Agrippa Street. From here I was to prepare the emigration of the Dinslaken children to Belgium and Holland; I was also to act as tutor to the thirty Jewish apprentices of the home. Although the institution had escaped the destruction of November 10, the

effects of this black day in Jewish history were obvious here, too. Many boys, who could not work in the destroyed school for artisans, had returned to their hometowns and villages. They wanted to find out how the conditions were there and whether their fathers or brothers had been taken to concentration camps. However, after a few days all the boys had returned to Cologne because the conditions "at home" were much worse. The mob had been much more destructive in the smaller places from which most of the boys had come.

During the first two weeks I took advantage of the good meals served in the backyard of a former Jewish organization. There was a long wooden table with benches. Without taking pay a woman, perhaps a Jewish lady whose husband was under arrest, served out the *Eintopfgericht*, a hot soup with barley or noodles in it; in addition everybody received a slice of bread. Here one met all types of citizens. Many of them were elderly people or those who had escaped the Nazi roundup. The chief topic of conversation was, naturally, emigration: "Are you going to America?" "What is your waiting number in Stuttgart?"—seat of the U.S. Consulate. Those who now "enjoyed" their bowls of soup together had previously been complete strangers. Yet they all talked about their common interests—arrests, permits, affidavits, good connections, illegal transfers of money, crossing the border. They talked softly, in whispers. All of them were scared, frightened of Jewish spies paid by the Gestapo. Indeed, they were full of fear. They did not dare to pronounce the name of Hitler; instead they referred to him as "Horowitz."

In the meantime the city of Cologne prepared for the great festival of peace—Christmas. Stores, shops, and streets were decorated with fir trees, electric candles, and the Star of Bethlehem. From some corners loudspeakers blared the famous German *Weihnachtslieder* (Christmas songs) "*Heilige Nacht*" or "*O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, wie grün sind deine Blätter*." There were many stalls where children in particular could buy candy or ginger-

bread. In front of a large store (Kaufhof) children sang Christmas carols. The air was full of peace and love.

However, any Jew who had experienced November 10 had to be very realistic. Very soon one noticed that Christendom and Nazidom seemed to be in perfect harmony. Many stores exhibited the photo of the Führer next to a scene of Bethlehem and the festivities in this sacred place. Garlands with swastikas and glittering stars, symbols of brutality and peace, were strung side by side across the streets. The sidewalks were teeming with shoppers, the majority were men in gray, black, or brown uniforms. Most of them greeted each other with "Heil, Hitler!" and only rarely with the once-familiar "Frohes Fest!" The facades of the shopping centers, however, showed many dark spots. These were Jewish shops, which had been destroyed or closed by the Nazis. Overnight the big stores were all placed in Aryan hands, in accordance with the new legislation enacted in the Third Reich. *Der Stürmer*, Germany's leading anti-Semitic weekly, now an official Nazi organ, had put up special placards in many streets, displaying its chief slogan "The Jews are our misfortune!"

Julius Streicher, chief editor of this gutter-sheet and a well-known personality in the Nazi hierarchy, invited the Germans in his innumerable articles to eradicate the Jews, the "scum of the earth." He told them in special issues, published during Christmas and Lent, that Jews were in the habit of slaughtering Christian girls and using their blood for wine at Passover. I myself saw a *Stürmerspecial* in front of Cologne's Kaufhof, displaying a "Jewish" family seated around the Passover Seder table. Over a large glass of red wine was printed: "Germans, this is not red wine, it is the blood of a little German child, slaughtered by a Jew!" During the same week, in February 1939, the Cologne newspaper printed the following in bold headlines: "Baby disappears in front of Kaufhof." Waves of fear passed through the homes of those Jews who still remained in the city. A constant feeling of dread and insecurity

haunted those Jews who had so far avoided being sent to concentration camps. When, a little later, the baby was found safe and sound, an audible sigh of relief was uttered by the anxious Jews.

Despite all this, somehow life continued. The principal of the Apprentice Home and I

began to reorganize life and work in the institution. Besides trying to resettle in a German city, I wrestled with the Nazi bureaucracy to arrange the emigration of my former charges. There is no need to give a detailed account of the treatment accorded the Jews by the infallible bureaucracy of the Third Reich....

EXCERPTS FROM "STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE JEWISH QUESTION"

Office of the U.S. Chief of Counsel
Stenographic Report on a part
of the Conference on the Jewish Question
under the presidency of Field Marshal
Goering at the Reich Ministry for Air on
12 November 1938—11 o'clock

PART I

GOERING: Gentlemen! Today's meeting is of a decisive nature. I have received a letter written on the Führer's orders by the *Stabsleiter* of the Führer's deputy Borland requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another. And yesterday once again did the Führer request by phone for me to take coordinated action in the matter.

Since the problem is mainly an economic one, it is from the economic angle that it shall have to be tackled. Naturally a number of legal measures shall have to be taken which fall into the sphere of the minister of justice and into that of the minister of the interior; and certain propaganda measures shall be taken care of by the office of the minister of propaganda. The minister of finances and the minister of economic affairs shall take care of problems falling into their respective resorts.

The meeting in which we first talked about this question and came to the decision to aryanize the German economy, to take the Jew out of it, and put him into our debit ledger, was one in which, to our shame, we only made pretty plans, which were executed very slowly. We then had a demonstration, right here in Berlin; we told the people that something decisive would be done, but again nothing happened. We have had this affair in Paris now, more demonstrations followed, and this time something decisive must be done!

Because, gentlemen, I have had enough of these demonstrations! They harm not the Jew, but me, who is the last authority for coordinating the German economy.

If today, a Jewish shop is destroyed, if goods are thrown into the street, the insurance company will pay for the damages, which the Jew does not even have—and furthermore goods of the consumer goods belonging to the people, are destroyed. If in the future demonstrations, which are necessary occur, then I pray that they be directed so as not to hurt us.

Because it's insane to burn out and destroy a Jewish warehouse then have a German insurance company making good the loss. And the goods which I need desperately, whole bales of



**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center(JSOURCE)**

**Discussions by the Authorities
Following *Kristallnacht***

(November 12, 1938)

**Stenographic Report of the Meeting on the
Jewish Question held under the Chairmanship of
Field Marshal Goering in the Reich Air Ministry
at 11 A.M. on November 12, 1938**

Goering: Gentlemen! Today's meeting is of decisive importance. I have received a letter on the Fuehrer's orders by the Head of Staff of the Fuehrer's deputy, Bormann, with instructions that the Jewish Question is to be summed up and coordinated once and for all and solved one way or another. A phone call from the Fuehrer to me yesterday again gave me instructions that decisive coordinated steps must now be outlined.

As the problem is in the main a large-scale economic matter, it is from this angle that it will have to be tackled. This will, of course, produce a number of legal measures, in the jurisdiction of the Justice Minister as well as the Minister of Interior; and then the resultant propaganda measures which fall into the area of the Propaganda Minister; and of course also measures by the Finance Minister and Economics Minister.

At the meeting at which this question was discussed for the first time and it was decided to Aryanize the German economy, to get the Jew out of the economy, to make them debtors on a pension, we unfortunately only made very fine plans, but then dragged our feet in following them up....

Heydrich: After all the elimination of the Jew from economic life, in the end there is still always the basic problem of getting the Jew out of Germany. May I make a few suggestions in this connection?

Following a suggestion made by the *Reichskommissar* we have set up a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna* with the aid of

which we have taken at least 50,000 Jews away from Austria, while only 19,000 Jews were taken out of the Reich during the same period. It was made possible by coordination between the Ministry of Economics, which was responsible, and the foreign aid organizations.

Goering: First of all you cooperated with the local leader of the "green border" [clandestine border crossing]. That is the main thing.

Heydrich: That involved only very small numbers, Mr. Field Marshal. The illegal—

Goering: The story has gone through the entire world press. In the first night the Jews were expelled to Czechoslovakia. Next morning the Czechs caught them and pushed them across into Hungary. From Hungary they were returned to Germany and then to Czechoslovakia. That way they traveled around and around. In the end they finished up on an old barge on the Danube. They stayed there and wherever they tried to land they were turned away again.

Heydrich: That's what was reported. There were not even as many as 100 Jews.

Goering: For two weeks, in effect, a number of Jews emigrated every midnight. That was in Burgenland.

Heydrich: At least 45,000 Jews got away by legal means.

Goering: How was that possible?

Heydrich: Through the Jewish Community Council we took a certain sum off the rich Jews who wanted to emigrate. That was how it was done. With this money and some additional foreign currency it was then possible to get out a number of poor Jews. After all, the problem is not to get the rich Jews out, but the Jewish mob.

Goering: But, fellows, have you ever thought about this properly? It doesn't really help us even if we get a few hundred thousand of the Jewish mob away from Germany. Have you ever considered whether this procedure may not, in the long run, cost so much foreign currency that we cannot continue with it permanently?

Heydrich: Only the foreign currency that every Jew received.

(Goering: agrees.)

This way, may I suggest that we set up a similar bureau in the Reich, with the cooperation of the government agencies concerned, and that we make use of this experience [Austria] in order to find a solution for the Reich, at the same time avoiding the mistakes which the Field Marshal has so rightly pointed out to us?

(Goering: agrees.)

A second way of getting the Jews out would be an emigration operation for

the Jews in the rest of the Reich, spread over at least 8 to 10 years. We cannot get out more than the maximum of 8,000 to 10,000 Jews a year. That would leave a great many Jews here. Because of Aryanization and other restrictions Jewry will be unemployed. We will see the remaining Jews becoming proletarians. I would have to take measures in Germany to isolate the Jews, on the one hand, so that they will not enter into the normal life of the Germans. On the other hand, I must create possibilities of permitting the Jews certain activities, in the matter of lawyers, doctors, barbers, etc., while yet limiting them to the smallest possible circle of customers. This question will have to be studied.

As far as isolation is concerned, I should like to put forward a few suggestions, purely police matters, which are important in part for their psychological effect on public opinion. For instance, the identification of the Jews, saying: Every person who is a Jew in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws must wear a certain distinguishing mark. This is a possibility which would simplify many other matters – I don't see any danger of excesses against the Jews – and it would make our relationship with foreign Jews easier.

Goering: A uniform!

Heydrich: Badge. This would also prevent the foreign Jews whose external appearance is no different from that of the local Jews, from suffering the same disadvantages.

Goering: But my dear Heydrich, you will not be able to avoid having ghettos in the cities on a really big scale. They will have to be established.

Heydrich: As for the matter of ghettos, I would like to make my position clear right away. From a police point of view I think that a ghetto, in the form of a completely segregated district with only Jews, is not possible. We would have no control over a ghetto where the Jew gets together with the whole of his Jewish tribe. It would be a permanent hideout for criminals and first of all [a source] of epidemics and the like. The situation today is that the German population...[which lives together with the Jews] forces the Jews to behave more carefully in the streets and the houses. The control of the Jews by the watchful eyes of the whole population is better than putting thousands upon thousands of Jews together in a single district of a city where uniformed officials will be unable to check on their daily activities.

Goering: We only have to cut off the telephone link with the outside.

Heydrich: I could not stop the movements of Jewry out from this district completely.

Goering: And in cities really all their own?

Heydrich: Yes, if I put them into cities entirely their own. But then this city would become such a center for criminal elements that it would be very dangerous. I would try a different way....

Goering: I shall choose the definition that the German Jews as a whole, as a punishment for their abominable crimes, etc., etc., will have to pay a *Kontribution* (fine) of one billion. That will do it. The swine won't hurry to

commit another murder. In general I must say once again: I should not like to be a Jew in Germany.

v. Krosigk: That is why I would like to emphasize what Mr. Heydrich said at the beginning: we must try everything in the way of more export, of getting the Jews out abroad. It will always be the decisive point that we do not have to keep this whole proletarian company here. It will always be a terrible burden to deal with them.

(Frick: and a danger.)

I also do not imagine that if we are forced to have ghettos it would be very pleasant. The likelihood of having to have ghettos is not pleasant. Therefore the aim must be what Heydrich said: out with whoever can be got out!

Goering: The second point is the following. If the German Reich should in the near future become involved in conflict abroad then it is obvious that we in Germany will first of all make sure of settling accounts with the Jews. Apart from that the Fuehrer is now at last to make a major move abroad, starting with the Powers which have brought up the Jewish question, in order really to get around to the Madagascar solution. He explained this to me in detail on November 9. There is no longer any other way. He is also going to say to the other nations: "Why do you keep talking about the Jews? – Take them!..."

Funk: The decisive question is whether the Jewish stores will have to be reopened or not?

Goering: That depends on the extent to which these Jewish stores have a relatively large turnover. If that is the case it is a sign that the German people are simply forced to buy there although it is a Jewish store, because there is a need. If all the Jewish stores that are shut now were to be shut before Christmas many would go empty-handed.

Fischboeck: We already have a precise plan for this in Austria, Mr. Field Marshal General. In Vienna there are 12,000 Jewish artisans' businesses and 5,000 Jewish retail stores. Even before the *Umbruch*** there was a plan for all the tradesmen involved in these 17,000 open businesses; of the 12,000 artisans' shops almost 10,000 were to be closed for good, and 2,000 kept going. Of the 5,000 retail stores, 1,000 were to be kept going, that is they were to be Aryanized, and 4,000 were to be shut. According to this plan, then, 3,000 to 3,500 of the total of 17,000 businesses would remain open, and all the others would be closed. This is calculated on the basis of investigation for each separate branch and in accordance with local requirements. It has been settled with all the competent authorities and could start tomorrow, as soon as we get the Law which we requested in September, which would authorize us to withdraw trade licenses generally, without any connection with the Jewish Question. It would be quite a short Law.

Goering: I will issue the regulation today.

Fischboeck: We have been promised this for Austria within the framework of our general economic plan. I think that it was not settled only because of ongoing negotiations between the Reich Ministry of Economics and [the

Ministry of] Nutrition. There was agreement on principle. As soon as we have it we can close these 10,000 businesses officially. That's just paperwork. In order to carry it out it will be then still be necessary for somebody to see what is to be done with the goods in these businesses. Up to last week we had had the intention of leaving the liquidation of stores more or less to the Jews themselves. That will now no longer be possible. We plan to create an economic agency for all these businesses together, which will see to it that use is made of these goods. In general this will be done best by handing them over to the branch concerned, which can then divide them up among the Aryan businesses, who can either take them on commission or pay for them.

If this is carried out along the proposed lines we will be left with only about another 3,000 businesses slated for Aryanization in accordance with the plans for the various branches. There are already firm buyers for about half these stores, and their purchase contracts have been checked sufficiently for immediate authorization. In many cases the authorization has not been finalized only because we were waiting for the definitive decision on the planning issue. Negotiations have also proceeded quite far for the other 15,000 businesses. We are of the opinion that we should set ourselves a deadline, which might be the end of this year. If no definite buyer has been found by the end of the year for the retail stores that are to be Aryanized we will check again whether they should not be liquidated after all. That should usually be possible: artisans' shops are very individual businesses. As far as retail stores are concerned the matter would never be so urgent that it could be said that the economic damage was too great. That would leave us with just a very few stores that have been judged necessary but for which there are no buyers: They would have to be taken on by the Public Trustee's Office. I don't think that it would come to as many as 100 businesses, probably fewer. In this way we could have eliminated all publicly visible Jewish businesses by the end of the year.

Goering: That would be excellent!

Fischboeck: Then 12,000 or 14,000 of 17,000 businesses would be closed and the rest Aryanized or transferred to the State Trustee.

Goering: I must say that this proposal is marvelous. Then the whole business would really be cleared out by Christmas or the end of the year in Vienna, one of the chief Jewish cities, so to say.

Funk: We can do it here [in Germany] too. I have prepared a Regulation for this matter which states that from January 1, 1939, Jews are forbidden to operate retail stores and commission agencies, or to operate independent artisans' businesses. They are also forbidden to hire employees for this purpose, to offer such services, to advertise them or to accept orders. Where any Jewish trade is carried out it will be closed by the Police. From January 1, 1939, a Jew can no longer be the manager of a business, in accordance with the Law for the Organization of National Labor, of January 20, 1934. Where a Jew is in a leading position in an economic enterprise without being the official manager his employment can be terminated by the manager with six weeks' notice. At the end of the period of notice all claims of the employee deriving from the terminated contract will be void, including pension rights where these existed. That is always very unpleasant and a great danger. A Jew cannot be a member of a cooperative. Jewish membership in cooperatives is terminated on December 31, 1938.

No special authorization is required. The Reich Ministers concerned are being authorized to issue the Regulations necessary for the implementation of the Law....

PS-1816.

* See Establishment of the Central Office For Jewish Emigration in Vienna

** Austrian expression for *Anschluss*.

Source: Yad Vashem

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APPENDIX III

Transfer operation for a period of several months because he shared the misgivings evoked by the Peel Commission's proposal on Palestine, and it was not until the spring of 1938 that he reinstated his approval of the Transfer undertaking.⁵⁷ As war approached, however, the Transfer activities inevitably faded out.

1938: The Fateful Year

Adolf Eichmann and the System of Forced Emigration

At the same time that doubts were raised about the necessity and efficacy of the Transfer Agreement, the Gestapo and the SD were pressing for the acceleration of Jewish emigration. Their treatment of the Jewish problem is associated with Adolf Eichmann, who was to become a symbol of the mass murder of the Jews, figuring as the loyal henchman of the master butchers of the Third Reich and as the moving spirit behind the bureaucratic organization of the "Final Solution." Ever since Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem and the death sentence of the Israeli court, his character has been a point of contention among historians and commentators. Some regard him as the personification of the evil spirit of National Socialism, a man impelled by an insatiable hatred who not only put the teachings of anti-Semitism into practice but also took them to their most extreme form in calculated, daily practice. Others contend that Eichmann was merely a small cog in an enormous wheel, an ordinary man who merely wished to please his superiors. According to Hannah Arendt, he was not even motivated by any special anti-Semitic impulse. What has caused this major discrepancy in the assessments of the man when there is no disagreement about the horrendous consequences of his actions? Eichmann was instrumental in adding a new dimension to the experience not only of the Jewish people but of all humankind: genocide. The very dispute about his nature reflects the Janus-faced character of the Nazi regime, which could dress the most destructive of man's irrational drives in the guise of routine activities.

Adolf Eichmann was born in 1906 to a bookkeeper in Solingen, a German industrial city in the Rhineland. When he was eight, his family moved to Linz, Austria, where Eichmann lived until 1933. He did not complete high school or the course in mechanics that he pursued for two years in a vocational school. After trying his hand at various jobs, he worked for a few years as a traveling salesman for the Vacuum Oil Company, crisscrossing the country on a red motorcycle; at one point he suffered an accident that resulted in severe skull fractures. In 1932 Eichmann joined the Austrian National Socialist party and later the SS, under the influence of Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner (who in 1942 succeeded Reinhard Heydrich as head of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, or RSHA [Reich Main Security Office]). After losing his job in 1933, he moved to Germany and enlisted in an Austrian unit of the SS (then outlawed in Austria) that was training in exile in Germany. He received his military training in SS camps and did his first tour of duty in Dachau. In 1934 when Himmler shifted his headquarters to Berlin, Eichmann volunteered for the head office of the SD; later he claimed that he did not know what that institution engaged in and that he had found his way there almost by

chance.⁵⁸ In his book on the early development of the SD, Shlomo Aronson explained Eichmann's adjustment to the Nazi hierarchy in these words, "He turned into a mass murderer because he could develop his future actions from latent personality traits compatible with the atmosphere in the SD."⁵⁹

Eichmann was initially employed in the section that investigated the Free masons, but early in 1935 he was transferred to a new SD Intelligence Department that dealt with the Jews. At that time the Gestapo and the SD intended to coordinate their activities related to the Jews, pooling information and systematizing their handling of affairs. They also moved to extend the scope of their activities to Jewry abroad and to establish direct contact with Jewish leaders in order to speed up emigration.⁶⁰

Serving in the SD's Jewish Department (II-112), Eichmann became the leading expert on all things Jewish. He even claimed that he tried to learn some Hebrew and Yiddish and that he took a special interest in Zionism. In the autumn of 1937, together with the director of his department, Herbert Hagen, he traveled to Palestine and Egypt to examine the political situation there. At the end of his detailed report on that journey, Eichmann concluded that the Third Reich should not step up the emigration of Jews to Palestine, for "as far as the Reich is concerned, the creation of an independent state by the Jews in Palestine should be impeded."⁶¹

As early as January 1937 the SD called for concentrating the management of Jewish emigration in the framework of a special office of the Gestapo and the SD, one that would deal with all matters related to accelerating emigration, including immigration opportunities abroad, negotiating economic arrangements, and even the transfer of capital.⁶² To induce the many Jews who still seemed unwilling to emigrate, two courses of action were recommended in January 1938: destroying the Jews' economic base and frightening them by terror.⁶³

After the annexation of Austria these directives were put into practice, with the pogroms instigated against Austria's nearly two hundred thousand Jews being more extreme than the acts of terror perpetrated in Germany during the early months of 1933. Great numbers of Jews were arrested, humiliated, tortured, and sent to the Dachau concentration camp.⁶⁴ On March 18 the community's institutions were closed down and its leaders arrested.

Several days after the Germans entered Austria, Eichmann showed up in Vienna to organize the emigration of the Jews and introduce a new system conducted according to the following principles:

1. Emigration was no longer to be an act of choice organized by the Jews but an operation conducted under the supervision of the Security Police.
2. This forced emigration was to be effected by requiring existing Jewish organizations to carry out the instructions of the SD.
3. The economic power of Jewry would be destroyed and the property of the emigrants would be confiscated, leaving them only the sum required to enter their proposed countries of immigration.

In Vienna Eichmann demonstrated for the first time that he was capable not only of analyzing and assessing the Jewish situation in

The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry,
Leni Yahel. Oxford Press. Oxford, 1990. p. 104-1

but of activity. The conclusions drawn from his inquiry. He also evinced organizational abilities that his superiors were quick to praise.⁶⁵ At the beginning of May, he saw to it that the institutions of the Jewish community headed by Dr. Joseph Löwenherz as well as the Palestine Office would resume functioning by having their directors released from internment.⁶⁶ Under the constant threat of incarceration in a concentration camp, the Jews were forced to collaborate, and the pressure to emigrate was so strong that Löwenherz suggested consolidating the organizational and technical procedures for obtaining emigration permits because the fragmentation of administrative bodies was delaying departure. Eichmann, however, established the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in August 1938, which operated as a coercive apparatus.⁶⁷ One of the witnesses at the Eichmann trial compared it to "a flour mill tied in with a bakery. You put a Jew in at one end . . . [and] he comes out at the other with no money, no rights, only a passport saying: You must leave the country within two weeks; otherwise you will go to a concentration camp."⁶⁸ Thus, the foundation was laid for the method that would henceforth be used to handle Jewish emigration.

Revocation of the Communities' Public Status

The SD was not the only arm of the German regime interested in making life intolerable for the Jews. The desire to dispose of them as quickly as possible, a wish shared by all the arms of the Nazi regime, gave rise to different proposals.⁶⁹ In the spring of 1938 the Reich minister for church affairs persuaded the interior minister to set about changing the legal status of the Jewish communities. On March 28 the status of the Jewish communities as corporate bodies under public law was abrogated by statute; henceforth these communities became private associations, with all their activities subject to government supervision. The law marked a new stage in the process of stripping the Jews of their rights. While the Nuremberg Laws deprived the Jews as individuals of the rights attained by the emancipation, this new law nullified the rights of the Jewish collective as a public body. The communities could no longer receive financial benefits from the state or levy taxes on their members. During the summer decrees and regulations eroded the Jews' status further and limited their freedom of movement. Even before, on November 16, 1937, the Ministry of Interior in Prussia had issued a secret circular prohibiting the issuance of passports to Jews.⁷⁰ Jews were also forbidden to change their names and were required to carry special identity cards. In August 1938 another regulation required Jews who did not have their "Jewish names" appearing in a special list of first names to add to their given name the word Israel, if male, or Sarah, if female.⁷¹

Aryanization: The Destruction of the Economic Base

These isolating actions were accompanied by a wide-ranging and systematic program to undermine the Jews' economic base, officially called the Aryanization of Jewish property. As long as Schacht was piloting the German economy, he tried to prevent interference with the economic activity of the large Jewish businesses,

Emigration: Dilemma of the Jews

although medium and small establishments suffered considerably. Especially affected by the boycott were Jewish-owned businesses in small towns and in regions and small clothing, footwear, and food enterprises in the cities. Of about 100,000 Jewish-owned businesses, 39,552 were left by April 1, 1938.⁷² In January 1938 discussions had been instituted to define the term *Jewish businesses*, an law was eventually promulgated on June 14 as the Third Implementation Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law, that is, to the Nuremberg Laws.⁷³

The annexation of Austria, which imbued the Nazi leadership with a buoyant sense of confidence, accelerated the process. On March 26 Göring—as head of the autarkic Four-Year Plan—stated in Vienna that Aryanization must be implemented in an "absolutely systematic manner,"⁷⁴ intimating that the arrogation of Jewish property by the Nazis would be effected by the state and not through isolated and arbitrary actions (as had happened more than once, particularly in Austria). To prevent the Jews from saving their property by fictitious sales and registration under the names of non-Jewish associates, Göring issued the *Against the Support of the Camouflage of Jewish Businesses* on April 22. For days later, in conjunction with the Ministry of the Interior, he published the *Ordinance Requiring the Declaration of Jewish Property*,⁷⁵ whereby all Jews—including those married to non-Jews—were enjoined to declare their holdings in Germany and abroad. The term *property* included assets of all kinds: works of art, jewelry, even all types of commercial and social benefits. Property amounting to less than RM 5,000 (U.S. \$2,000) did not have to be declared, but any change—such as sale, rental, or opening of a business or a branch—would henceforth require authorization. From then on Aryanization was carried out under the supervision and with the participation, of party institutions. Many foreign countries adamantly protested the application of the order to their Jewish nationals residing in Germany. As a result Jews who were foreign nationals holding property in Germany but living abroad were exempted only in cases where there was a special obligation to the countries involved in accordance with the principle set down by Hitler personally.⁷⁶

Within the framework of these provisions, the so-called voluntary Aryanization proceeded apace; as a consequence businesses were sold at 60 to 75 percent of their value. The real amount decreased even further as a result of taxes and harsh payment terms; in the best of circumstances the Jewish seller received from 30 to 60 percent of the value of his property. The party's involvement in this process was conspicuous. Under the banner of conducting "a healthy middle-class policy," it demanded that buyers take care not to pay Jews "an unseemingly high price, so that Jewry will compensate for some of the damage it caused the German people."⁷⁷

The situation for the Jews was especially grave in Austria, where major and minor party leaders tried to take over as many businesses as possible. Many Nazis installed themselves as commissars in Jewish businesses or simply attempted to confiscate Jewish property on a variety of pretexts. Beginning in April the Property Traffic Office (*Vermögensverkehrsstelle*) handled close to 25,000 cases of Aryanization and liquidation, resulting in the closing of more than 80 percent of Jewish businesses.⁷⁸ As Helmut Genschel observed:

the state of affairs in Germany at the beginning of 1933 (see chap. 3) and termed Hitler's intentions "almost like a second stage of the National Socialist revolution."¹³

While the general policy line was set down by Hitler personally, its implementation was turned over to various organizations and pressure groups that jockeyed for control over the territory placed in their hands. The SS units that followed in the wake of the German army competed with the so-called civilian authorities, staffed by party functionaries, and both employed terror tactics to whatever degree they saw fit. Here and there, voices were raised in concern or protest; some even reached Hitler's ears. For example, the commander of the army in the East, Marshal Johannes von Blaskowitz, wrote a memorandum enumerating thirty-three cases of shooting, robbery, vandalism, and the like, expressing his fear that such incidents would affect the discipline of the soldiers who had witnessed them. He also noted that discussions with the Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei, or Sipo) and local Gestapo had been fruitless, since the latter was acting on instructions from the national command of the SS. He therefore asked that the rule of law be restored.

On November 18, 1939, Hitler's adjutant reported the führer's reaction that a war cannot be conducted by the methods of the Salvation Army. Blaskowitz's continuing complaints were of no avail.¹⁴ The events of September, when an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Germans were killed by Poles, were cited as justification for the German terror. Apparently on Hitler's instructions, the number of German casualties was exaggerated tenfold in the Reich's official propaganda, which spoke of 58,000 Germans missing or known to have been murdered.¹⁵ Moreover, Hitler issued a special amnesty on October 4, 1939, whose opening paragraph stated, "Actions carried out in the occupied Polish territories from September 1 until now, to express resentment of atrocities committed by the Poles, are not to be investigated as criminal acts." This amnesty was declared "to commemorate the victory concluding the battle imposed on us by Poland."¹⁶

Himmler's SS State

The Security Apparatus

Following the conquest of Poland, the state and party police—already instrumental in establishing the National Socialist state—were considerably expanded and reinforced. Within this domain, the SS State, Himmler—like his führer—took pains to maintain absolute control by delegating only partial and rarely exclusive authority to his subordinates. Ever since the 1920s, when he began cultivating the small force responsible for Hitler's personal safety into a large and comprehensive unit, he had based the Schutzstaffel (guard corps), known by its initials as the SS, on a creed that combined a racist worldview with elements borrowed from the experience of long-standing religious orders.

An SS candidate had first to meet strict standards of racial purity and physical appearance. He also had to pledge to uphold the principles of the organization's constitution. Its tenets included discipline and blind obedience, which Himmler had evidently copied from the Jesuits. Racial theories replaced the religious faith

that was at the heart of the order founded by Ignatius Loyola, yet like the latter Himmler regarded himself as the commander of each and every one of the members of his organization and entitled to do with them as he pleased. The office of the SS were often men who for one reason or another failed to find their place in the upper ranks of society but satisfied their desire for social status by joining an organization that professed to represent the nation's elite. Included in this category were members of the German aristocracy (many of whom had suffered great frustration during the Weimar period), dissatisfied academics, former army officers, and young people associated with nationalist organizations—all of whom derided the vulgarity of the SA and believed that the SS would enable them to realize their national and social aspirations alike. In the course of time, they were joined by people with a history of misconduct (to a greater or lesser degree) in their previous jobs as well as by government officials who were eager to establish a place for themselves in the new Nazi hierarchy. Heydrich, for example, a navy officer who had been forced to relinquish his post as the result of a scandal, was Himmler's choice to head the intelligence service he began developing in 1931.

At first the Security Service (SD) operated primarily within the party. Himmler saw his great opportunity when he prepared the purge of the SA's leadership in the summer of 1934 and used the occasion to extend his authority over the net work of detention camps in Germany. From 1934 to 1936 he concentrated on expanding and diversifying the SS. Its newly established administrative section headed by Oswald Pohl, began to establish contacts with German economic factors. At the same time, new units were added to the SS, the most important being the Death Heads, who took their name from the emblem worn on their caps.

Placed in charge of the concentration camps, the Death Heads were commanded by Theodor Eicke, who was the prime commander of the Dachau camp. Also formed and given rigorous professional military training was the Unit for Special Tasks (SS Verfügungstruppe), which was the nucleus of the later *Armee SS* (Waffen SS).

On June 17, 1936, Himmler was appointed chief of the German police in the Ministry of Interior. For the first time, the German police was organized into a nationwide framework that was henceforth under the command of a single man: Himmler. As Reichsführer-SS (RFSS) Himmler thus concentrated in his hands unlimited control over all matters having to do with security and the police. There was only one authority above him: the führer himself.

The police force was now composed of a number of units. The Order Police (Ordnungspolizei, or Orpo), commanded by Kurt Daluege, was responsible for maintaining order and the usual policing duties. Working alongside it was the Criminal Police (Kriminalpolizei, or Kripo) and the Border Guards (Grenzschutz). Finally, there was the Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei, or Sipo), which dealt with intelligence. Reinhard Heydrich headed the Security Police as well as the Security Service (SD), which was the intelligence arm of the SS. The Security Police—comprising the Political Police, known as the *Gestapo* (Geheime Staatspolizei), and the Criminal Police—supposedly functioned only as state agencies and did not intervene in party affairs. However, the duplication of the two bodies, the SS and the police force, was true in

because SS men filled most of the posts in both these forces. Nevertheless, there was considerable trespassing and infighting among the various arms and organizational frameworks over spheres of authority.

Over the years the ranks of the SS swelled to hundreds of thousands of people, with millions more working alongside them in auxiliary capacities. Under such circumstances the principle of elitism could be maintained in theory only. At the outbreak of the war, Himmler created yet another echelon of senior commanders charged with supervising both the SS and the police force and with handling special operations. They were known as Higher SS and Police Leaders (Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer, or HSSPF); one rank below them were the SS and Police Leaders (SS- und Polizeiführer). Their status was distinguished from that of the other commanders of the SS and the police force in that they were not subordinate to the central administrations of these two forces; instead, they were responsible for a specific geographical area and took their orders directly from Himmler.¹⁷

At the same time Himmler established an organizational framework that embraced all the security services and the police. Called the Reich's Security Main Office (RSHA) and officially established on September 27, 1939, it was headed by Heydrich. The RSHA was divided into branches and departments to deal with problems of domestic and foreign security,¹⁸ and over the years its internal organization underwent a number of changes. Working parallel to the RSHA was the administration in charge of the concentration camps and the Race and Settlement Main Office (Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt, or RUSHA), before which a broad new field of activity opened with the inception of the resettlement program. Altogether the SS bureaucracy consisted of twelve main offices, but the RSHA took pride of place among them. These huge bureaucracies swallowed up all the smaller organizations that had once functioned independently and concentrated under their auspices both the state's agencies, the Gestapo and Security Police, and the armed SS corps and their offices. It is quite likely that this organizational and administrative centralization was prompted by Himmler's anticipation that new tasks would fall to him after the army's conquests. He was clearly interested in expanding his control over the new territories and could do so only by virtue of the authority vested in the SS and the police.

Special police units had been fielded during the *Anschluss* to ensure the security of the new rulers, and the SS had prepared to take similar action prior to the conquest of Czechoslovakia. On October 10, 1938, immediately after the annexation of the Sudetenland, the *V/B* had announced that "in cooperation with the vanguard of the army, men from the Gestapo immediately began to purge the liberated territories of traitors, Marxists, and other enemies of the state." Six Special Operations Squads (Einsatzgruppen), totaling two thousand men, had been prepared for the war against Poland and were attached to various army groups.¹⁹

Himmler's appointment as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood made it possible for him to establish additional institutions of his own in the occupied territories beside the SS and the police force, which were already under his command. If we add to this the bureaucracy of the so-called civilian administration, headed by veteran party members, we get an idea of the German polyhierarchy. As the spheres of authority were never sharply defined,

the upshot of this plethora of offices and agencies was the administrative chaos that prevailed in conquered Poland.

The Concentration Camps

The concentration camp was the instrument by which Hitler terrorized the population—first in Germany and later in every territory subjugated by the Nazi regime. As early as March 1933, Himmler established the first camp near Dachau, a town not far from Munich. Theodor Eicke, Dachau's commander since the fall of 1933, created the general framework that became the archetype for all the subsequently established camps. The SS had exclusive and unrestricted control over these camps. Their organization evolved from 1934 to 1936 alongside Himmler's growing power as Reichsführer-SS. Detained in these camps was anyone considered an opponent of the regime: socialists, clergy of various faiths, and to an increasing extent Jews and members of other "inferior races." From 1938 onward the Nazis also imprisoned common criminals in the camps as well as such "asocial" elements as homosexuals, prostitutes, and beggars.

Arrests were made by special orders known as protective-custody warrants (*Schutzhaftbefehl*). The Weimar laws had allowed for such custody without a court order to protect people against harassment, but now the Nazis used the same order to camouflage actions that were diametrically opposed to the spirit of the original law, namely, the arrest of people they deemed their enemies. The judiciary protested this illegal detention and in April 1934 the Gestapo issued a regulation ostensibly substantiating its right to make such arrests. In May 1935 the independent authority of the Gestapo was officially recognized in Prussia, and the right to appeal its actions was restricted to the highest ranks of its own administration. On February 10, 1936, the Gestapo Law was enacted in Prussia, giving that body the exclusive right to make arrests. From then on the Gestapo was entitled to investigate all activities considered hostile to the state: the same law established the Gestapo's complete independence of the courts. Hitler appended his official approval by recognizing the Gestapo as a police force whose power extended throughout the country.²⁰ Thus, a division of authority came about whereby the Gestapo alone had the power to arrest people and send them to concentration camps, whereas the SS remained responsible for running the camps. However, the Gestapo managed to retain a foothold in the camps through so-called political departments and by conducting the registration of the prisoners.²¹

Beginning in 1936 one new camp was established after another: Sachsenhausen in September 1936, Buchenwald in August 1937, Flossenbürg and Mauthausen in Austria in 1938. In May 1939 the women's camp of Ravensbrück was added to the list. As the number of camps rose, the composition of their inmates was broadened and they were henceforth called State Camps for Education and Labor (Staatliche Besserungs- und Arbeitslager). At the same time, the Germans began to use the prisoners as a labor force, primarily in the enterprise known as the Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke (DEST), which was created to further Hitler's construction projects and was directed by Albert Speer. Particularly notorious was the quarry at Mauthausen, where thousands met their death, though other

camps were also built in the vicinity of quarries. This exploitation of prisoners as forced laborers led to the formation of special labor camps, many of which were attached to, and run by the staff of, the larger concentration camps.²²

Masses of Jews were first arrested in 1938, initially in Austria in the wake of the *Anschluss* and then in Germany on Kristallnacht. Thus, the overall number of prisoners in camps rose that year from 24,000 to 60,000. Owing to the forced emigration of the Jews, the figure was later reduced (see chap. 4). At the outbreak of the war, the concentration camps within the boundaries of the Reich contained 25,000 inmates, and by September 2, 1939, the Stuthof camp near Danzig was already prepared to take prisoners from the conquered territories.²³

The camps were run by a command hierarchy based on the tenets of leadership and discipline fostered in the SS. The deputies subordinate to the camp commander were responsible for the tasks of guarding the camp, running its offices, supervising the prisoners, overseeing the work program, and the like. The camp's administrative structure provided for prisoner self-management, whereby certain inmates were placed in charge of their fellow prisoners as a means of fomenting tension and discord. Poor nutrition, appalling sanitary conditions, iron discipline, the humiliation of prisoners, and the imposition of unspeakably brutal corporal and other punishments for even the slightest transgression—all made the concentration camp "educational system" into a hell with few parallels in the history of humankind.

Dachau, the first concentration camp, established the pattern that would be followed by all the rest. The camps were built in easily accessible places, that is, near a railroad and not too far from a city, for the supply of various services. Nevertheless, the Nazis were careful to conceal them from prying eyes by situating them either in a forest or some other isolated spot. They were divided into sections that were very different from each other in nature and appearance. The staff areas and living quarters of the commanders and lower ranks of the SS were built outside the camp and were well-tended and clean. They served as a pleasant facade for the camp proper, which was surrounded by a high electrified barbed wire fence and was guarded from watchtowers. Within the compound a large courtyard served as the area for the prisoners' roll call every morning and evening. Their living quarters were wooden barracks and their beds consisted of boards fixed to the walls in tiers. The inmates were classified according to type, which determined their status in the camp hierarchy. Each had a triangular patch of a given color sewn on his uniform: political prisoners had a red patch; criminals, green; socialists, black; homosexuals, pink; Jehovah's Witnesses, purple; emigrants, blue. The Jews had a second yellow triangle superimposed above the first to create a Star of David.²⁴

The guard units in the camps numbered between a thousand and fifteen hundred men, with another hundred or so people in attendance as service personnel, including a doctor and his staff. These numbers changed, of course, as the camps grew in size. Qualified prisoners were also used for technical work in the camps' offices and as help in the hospitals. Under Eicke, moreover, Dachau became a school for concentration camp guards and commanders; once these SS men were

trained to command and punish the prisoners, by means ranging from beatings to executions, he assigned them to other camps. Hence, the uniform style of contempt and cruelty that prevailed in all the camps.²⁵

Even before the establishment of the special extermination camps, a vast number of people died or were killed in detention. The camp inmates succumbed to exhaustion or illness as a result of malnutrition, debilitating labor, and harsh punitive measures. Some were shot while purportedly attempting to escape; others were thrown away or were murdered in bunkers. These deaths were often reported as suicides rather than ascribed to illness. As a result the concentration camps—referred to by the initials KZ for *Konzentrationslager*—cast a pall of terror over the entire population and were an effective deterrent to disobedience of the government orders, to resistance of any kind, and even to criticism.

The Polyhierarchy in Occupied Poland

Conditions in occupied Poland made it possible for Himmler to take another step toward extending his power in the Third Reich. Originally conceived as an instrument for *executing policy*, the huge policing mechanism under his control developed into a *source of policy*, a policymaker in its own right. A circular issued by Himmler on November 7, 1939, addressing itself to the organization of Gestapo in the Eastern territories stated, "The directors of the State Police Office [Stapoleitstellen] are authorized to deal with political affairs, alongside the Reich commissioners and the civil administration in their districts."²⁶ They acted in combination with the Einsatzgruppen, who, when the combat stage drew to a close, were stationed in various regions as permanent garrisons and now fulfilled the functions of the SD. Both these forces came under the authority of the HSS together, they established the concentration camps that became important instruments of terror and control in the occupied territories, just as they were in the Reich proper.

In contrast to the areas that were officially, though not always effectively annexed to the Reich, the *Generalgouvernement* was looked on as occupied territory and on Hitler's orders no orderly and independent administration was established there. Instead, the area was deliberately left in a state of near-anarchy in order to exploit the human potential as a work force and forestall any possibility of organizing cells of resistance.

Beyond the administrative disarray that traced to the absence of orderly and fruitful cooperation between the Polish and German agencies, the chaos was exacerbated by the relentless competition among the various German authorities: the army, as the occupying force; the civilian administration headed by Frank; the various branches of the RSHA were all working parallel to, and against, one another. The profusion of administrative bodies that characterized the administrative system of the Reich was carried even further in the occupied territory to the point of creating an inextricable jumble of authorities in which the Poles, above all the Jews, became trapped. Moreover, as time went on, the civil

the East. Holland was placed under a regime similar to that in Norway, and Dr. Artur Seyss-Inquart—who had taken an active role in the annexation of Austria and had served as Frank's deputy in the Generalgouvernement after the conquest of Poland—was appointed Reichskommissar. He had to share his rule with a strong contingent of the SS. Hence, there could be no doubt about the threat looming for the 140,000 Jews then living in Holland. This figure included 15,000 Jewish refugees, about half the number who had fled to Holland during the 1930s; the remainder had in the meantime emigrated overseas.⁴⁴

Belgium, like northern France, was ruled by a military government. Its Jewish community, numbering some 65,700 people at the time of the occupation, was very different in nature from the neighboring Dutch community, as most of the Jews in Belgium were immigrants and refugees. Many of the wealthy Belgian Jews, who constituted the leadership of the community, fled in time, leaving the defenseless behind. At first the refugees tried to get away to southern France in droves, but after a while most of them returned to Belgium.⁴⁵

Marking Hitler's successes on the battlefield, Benito Mussolini was quick to enter the war on June 10. On June 18, even before the fall of France, he met with Hitler in Munich to join in planning the coming moves and reap whatever benefits he could from the German victories, but Hitler allotted him only a small piece of southern France.

As far back as November 1939, when the Germans began discussing an attack on the West, plans were also reviewed for an assault on Britain. The subject arose again after the fall of France. At first Hitler seemed to believe that Britain, not willing or not daring to pursue the fight against him, would be prepared to conclude an agreement. But when he saw that Churchill was far from disposed toward coming to an understanding with him, he considered mounting an attack on the British Isles to secure absolute control over Western Europe before turning to his major objective: the war against Soviet Russia. The battle between the air forces of Germany and Great Britain is one of the most celebrated chapters of World War II. Its significance was summed up in Churchill's ringing statement, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." In September 1940, the Royal Air Force, smaller in size than its German counterpart, forced the enemy to abandon its attack plan, and the Nazis decided to postpone an invasion indefinitely.

In the meanwhile Mussolini, eager to extend his own empire, sent his forces to invade North Africa and advance toward Egypt in August 1940. By the middle of December, however, Sir Archibald Wavell, the commander of the British forces in the Middle East, not only had succeeded in beating the Italians back but also had taken tens of thousands of Italian POWs. Early in February 1941 the British forces reached Bengazi, in Italian-occupied Libya, thus lifting the threat to Egypt and Palestine. In October 1940 Mussolini also tried his strength in the Balkans by sending troops through Albania to attack Greece. But in the following months, he was repulsed there, as well, and the Germans had to come to his aid.

Germany's influence in southeastern Europe, particularly in the Balkans, was enhanced as a result of its victories in the East and the West. In this region, however, the Germans faced a strong and menacing rival: the Soviet Union. The D.A.I.

kan state that suffered most from the overt and covert struggle going on between these competing powers was Rumania, whose oil resources were coveted by both of them. In effect, the German penetration into Rumania had been in progress ever since Hitler's rise to power and had increased with his military successes. The Germans, who were interested in compensating the Russians for the concessions they had made in the partition of Poland, consented to their demands, and on June 28 Rumania was forced to cede Bessarabia and part of northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. A few days afterward Rumania joined the Axis powers, and by virtue of an agreement signed in Vienna on August 30, 1940—in the presence of the Italian and German foreign ministers—northern Transylvania was ceded to Hungary and the Dobruja region in the south was given over to Bulgaria. These territorial concessions sparked off such unrest in Rumania that King Carol II was forced to abdicate in favor of his son Michael. The country's real ruler, however, was Ion Antonescu, who proceeded to bring members of the fascist Iron Guard into his government. Whatever remained of the country's democratic constitution was abrogated in September, and in October the German army entered Rumania. The rest of the Balkan states—Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia—did not come under direct German influence until the spring of 1941. Hungary held a unique place among this constellation of countries in that it received generous benefits from the Germans, although the German army did not enter the country until March 1944. Above all, the events in Rumania caused a deterioration in the conditions of the country's Jews, who were already suffering from stringent discriminatory laws modeled on those enacted by the Nazis.

As a consequence of all these military and political maneuvers, by the spring of 1941 close to 3 million Jews were under German control: 675,000 in the Reich and the annexed territories and about 2,250,000 in the occupied countries. A strong Nazi influence also threatened the approximately 430,000 Jews in the satellite countries of Slovakia, Rumania, and Italy. And over them all, Himmler cast his net of agencies, thus creating an SS State throughout Europe.

Himmler: Moving from Theory to Practice

Who was Heinrich Himmler—this man whose name is as closely associated with the fate of European Jewry during the Nazi era as that of the Führer himself, this man who by his own testimony murdered millions of people in cold blood and was prepared to murder many millions more? Many have wondered but found no explanation for the fact that this man—whose appearance in no way bespoke a demonic character—became the architect and chief prosecutor of genocide. In his book *The Face of the Third Reich*, the biographer Joachim C. Fest describes two faces of Himmler that were revealed in two separate death masks: one portraying grotesque and distorted features, the other showing the simple face of a romantic petit bourgeois.⁴⁶ Giving his version of the subhuman, Himmler stated:

A subhuman is a creature of nature that seems biologically equal to all others. He has

frightful creature. He is merely an attempt at a man; his facial features are similar to those of humans, but from the intellectual and psychological points of view he ranks lower than the beasts. Lurking in his soul is a brute chaos of wild, unbridled lusts, an inchoate desire to destroy, the most primitive craving, shameless vulgarity. For he is a subhuman, nothing more! The bearer of a human face is not equal in every way. Woe to whoever forgets that.⁴⁷

Anyone who knows what Himmler wrought not only to the Jewish people but to humanity as a whole cannot help but think that he unwittingly drew his self-portrait in this statement. According to Fest, Himmler was closer to Hitler than anyone else and on his own initiative carried Hitler's thoughts to their ultimate conclusion. He was also accorded the power to put them into practice, and that is what established his place in the hierarchy of the Third Reich.⁴⁸

Himmler looked upon Hitler as a kind of divine creature whose likes are born only once in a millennium, an incarnation of Jesus Christ or of the Hindu god Krishna. His feelings toward the führer fluctuated between mystical adoration and fear, and this irrational attitude continued to motivate him even after the two men had parted ways toward the end of the war. It was Himmler who translated the führer's ultimate conclusions into action. Fest calls him "Petty Bourgeois and Grand Inquisitor."⁴⁹

The petit bourgeois was born in 1900 to a respected Catholic family in Bavaria. His father, a teacher, raised his sons strictly but also imbued them, or at least Heinrich, with his own love for the history of ancient and medieval Germany. After finishing school, Himmler took up art in the closing stages of World War I and then completed his studies as a certified agronomist. He joined the National Socialist party early enough to participate in Hitler's abortive coup in 1923. Until the end of the 1920s, however, he remained a private citizen, living on his farm and raising an improved stock of chickens. His great moment came when Hitler took notice of him and in 1929 charged him with organizing the SS.

Unlike many of the leaders of the Nazi regime, Himmler fully believed the myth that the German race was destined to rule the world. Since the epitome of the race was its "good blood," it was vital to preserve, improve, and extend it through procreation. To determine the genealogy of the race Himmler founded a special institute within the SS called Heritage of the Forefathers (Ahnenerbe). But its purpose was not just theoretical study, for he also wanted to put principles into practice and encourage as high as possible a birthrate of those with "good blood." Consequently, he issued strict regulations on marriage for the men of SS and established special institutions called Lebensborn (the source of life) for women bearing children out of wedlock when both parents were of pure German stock. Himmler was not content with encouraging the propagation of what he considered the superior race in Germany alone; he also wanted to save the offspring of so-called pure Germans through the world and replant them in their homeland. On September 7, 1940, in a speech to officers of a special SS unit named in honor of Adolf Hitler, he said, "For eleven years now I have been serving as Reichskommissar-SS. As far as I am concerned, there has always been only one immutable, all-inclusive goal: to create an order of good blood capable of serving Germany; in order that it be unshakable and unchangeable."

that will spread a consciousness of Nordic blood until we draw to us all the Nordic blood in the world."⁵⁰

Hitler's Minister of the Treasury, Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, once said Himmler, "Hitler could not have assigned the task of disposing of his political garbage to a more appropriate character than Himmler. He pedantically created a terror organization and knew neither mercy nor remorse."⁵¹

Himmler himself remarked of the way he was handling matters in the Third Reich that he worked toward achieving his goal with relentless and unflinching determination but was flexible about the means used to achieve it.⁵² This dichotomy of the goal remaining immutable but the means of attaining it being varied; adaptable was also characteristic of Hitler's approach—yet another similarity between the two men. It enabled Himmler to combine his mystical and fantastical concepts with an unremitting war of pure might. Without Himmler's clever control of the instruments of power, he would not have been able to establish the State that extended to every country in Europe in which the Nazis gained a foothold. It was in occupied Poland that he took the decisive step toward expanding his realm. Here his bureaucracy not only was the power behind the realization of the racial policy but set the objectives and decided on the means of achieving them. The very fact that Himmler and his executors became the central figures directing the implacable war against the Jews accorded them, and primarily Himmler as their leader, a crucial position in the hierarchy of Nazi rule which it extended. Hitler's hatred of the Jews and the importance he ascribed to solving the Jewish problem according to his concept were among the factors that ensured Himmler's status as the man who carried out the führer's program.

It might have been assumed that in wartime, when stress is necessarily laid on the military struggle, the influence of the SS would have declined, since it longer held the center stage. If Hitler had lost interest in Himmler's activities, the latter's own political career would have come to an end. He forestalled that danger in two ways: one was by associating the SS with the war effort through the establishment of the armed or Waffen SS while being careful to prevent the arrival of influence over these corps from overriding his own.⁵³ The other means of maintaining his focal position was by acting to Germanize the occupied territory in East and solve the Jewish problem. The more he accomplished in fulfilling the two tasks, the more he could hope to remain in the führer's good graces, enhancing his own power, for the authority of the man who realized Hitler's ambition would not be open to appeal. In the course of time, Himmler tried to add a third element to these two sources of power by building an SS economic empire, but he had less success in that sphere.

The war against the Jews. Lucy Dawidowicz.
Bantam Books, New York, 1986 p 70-87

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The SS: Instrument of the Final Solution

In 1936 a standard lecture for SS units contained the following passage: "The Jew is a parasite. Wherever he flourishes, the people die. . . Elimination of the Jew from our community is to be regarded as an emergency defense measure." 1 The "right of emergency defense" was the title Hitler used for the last chapter of *Mein Kampf*, in which he had advocated the gassing of "twelve or fifteen thousand" Jews. The SS text reveals the emerging role of the SS as an expression of Hitler's will and as the central executing arm in the Final Solution of the Jewish Question.

The SS came into being early in 1925, by Hitler's order, as a select corps drawn from SA membership to serve as an efficient, elite, and completely dependable bodyguard for the party's leadership. The emphasis from the start was on loyalty, obedience, and discipline, but the SS remained insignificant in size and undistinguished in function until Hitler appointed Heinrich Himmler to head it and conferred upon him, in January 1929, the grandiose title of Reichsführer-SS. Himmler soon transformed the SS into an organization guided solely by the will of the Führer and that became, in Hans Buchheim's words, "the real and essential instrument of the Führer's authority." 2 Indeed, Himmler came to regard himself as an instrument of Hitler's will.

The SS: Instrument of the Final Solution

Himmler's name and title have come to evoke images of a demonic cv contained within a frame of steely iciness, rigor, and discipline, unloose not in the passion of rage or hate, but on calculation. Yet his early life shaped by familial authoritarianism, seemed ordinary and dull, never suggestive of the sinister role he would later assume.

Born in 1900 in Munich, the second son of middle-class Catholic parents, Himmler had an unexceptional youth. The diary that he started to keep in 1914 shows him as pedantic, pedestrian, and unimaginative already molded according to the parental tradition of rigid self-discipline. When war broke out, he was stricken with patriotic passion. At seventeen when he reached the age of eligibility, he applied to an officer training program and was eventually admitted, but while he was still in training the armistice was signed. However, the cadets in training were not discharged until after the military had suppressed the revolution, dissolved its institutions, and regained political control. Here the young Himmler may have had his first lessons in the uses of the military for political suppression.

Nineteen-nineteen was the critical year for Himmler as it had been for Hitler. During his military training, Himmler was no doubt indoctrinated in rightist-nationalist politics. Surely there was talk about the Dolchstoß betrayal by the Jews, and the "Jewish" role in the abortive Communist revolution that he witnessed. It must have been an extraordinary revelation. In mid-1919, while recuperating from an illness—he was always sick and ailing—he read twenty-eight books, some of which showed his new developing interest in politics and war as well as in anti-Semitism and anti-Masonry.³ Of a tract replete with anti-Semitic anecdotes, which drew lavishly from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and which depicted Jews, Freemasons, and Democrats as fomenters of revolution, Himmler noted in his diary: "A book that explains everything and tells us where we must fight against next time." He was to continue reading this kind of literature for the next few years.

Early in 1920 Himmler joined the *Einwohnerwehr*, a home-guard force one of the many military and paramilitary groups formed by ex-soldiers reluctant to abandon military pursuits, whose nationalist bias intensified their discontent with Germany's new democratic government. Later that year, having decided that he would be a farmer, he enrolled in an agricultural training school and undertook to do his practical training on a farm. During this period, living in relative isolation, his national political passion seemed to have been stilled, but shortly after his return to Munich at the end of 1921, he renewed his interest in rightist politics. He resumed his anti-Semitic reading, which now included Howard Stewart Chamberlain's booklet *Race and Nation*, of which he wrote

his diary: "It is true and one has the impression that it is objective, not just hate-filled anti-Semitism. Because of this it has more effect. These terrible Jews."

German racial notions began to absorb him. He had apparently renewed his contacts with the paramilitary and clandestine nationalist organizations then flourishing in Munich, and seemed eager to participate in their activities. When he completed agricultural school, he got a job just outside Munich with a nitrogen fertilizer company, reflecting, no doubt, a streak of coprophilia. While there, in the fall of 1922, he joined the *Reichsflagge*, one of the military groups under Ernst Röhm's leadership, and in August 1923, following Röhm, Himmler joined the NSDAP. The next month he quit his job and joined the Bavarian Reichswehr, fulfilling his boyhood warrior ambitions. In Hitler's attempted putsch that November, Himmler was the ensign bearer for Röhm's military formations. Although the ignominious failure of the putsch and the subsequent suppression of the rightist nationalist organizations (including the NSDAP) depressed Himmler, they did not weaken the magnetism that drew him to rightist politics.

Early in 1924 he joined the *Nationalsozialistische Freiheitsbewegung* (NSFB; National Socialist Freedom Movement), headed by General Ludendorff and Gregor Strasser, one of the new Volkist organizations set up as a substitute for the banned NSDAP. He threw himself intensively into work for Volkist causes, speaking and writing. He stopped looking for work, lost touch with his old friends and his old way of life. But his reading habits and his literary taste persisted without change. About half the books he read were anti-Semitic or Volkist, or at the very least, elicited anti-Semitic comments that he set down in his diary. He discovered Fritsch's *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, in which "one can find all the relevant material. . . . If only some of the eternally blind could have it put before their eyes." He read avidly about Hitler and was deeply impressed by Eckart's *Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin*, which he promised himself to reread often. In 1924 Himmler wrote of Hitler that he "is truly a great man, and above all a genuine and pure one. His speeches are splendid works of Germandom and Aryanism."

About this time, too, Himmler discovered that his interest in agriculture could be brought into a racial context. He is believed to have come under the influence of the *Artamanen Bund*, a racialist utopian group that held that a nation could be kept vital and creative only through the existence of peasant communities of racial and national purity. This pseudomystical and occultist doctrine of "blood and soil" deeply affected him, but would not find an outlet until after he had attained sufficient confidence in himself and high rank in the Nazi party to indulge in such

exercises. (Hitler, though himself attracted to occultist Volkism, had learned the lesson of Schönerer's failure and tried to discourage these tendencies within the party.)

In June 1924 Himmler finally found a job he wanted, one that would satisfy him ideologically and provide him with the political environment he had come to need. He became secretary and general assistant to Strasser, who was the NSFB Gauleiter for Lower Bavaria. Early in May 1925 the whole Strasser organization, lock, stock, and barrel, went over to the NSDAP, which Hitler had begun to rebuild after his release from Landsberg. Thus Himmler automatically became the NSDAP Deputy Gauleiter of Lower Bavaria. A year later, when Strasser became the party's propaganda leader, Himmler was once again made his deputy. In 1927 Himmler was appointed deputy leader of the SS, and finally, in 1929, at the age of twenty-nine, with the appointment as Reichsführer-SS, he emerged at the top of the field in his chosen career—the professional Nazi.

As Reichsführer-SS Himmler was able to integrate his diverse compulsions and obsessions—with the military, the occult, racial nationalism, and anti-Semitism—and give them form and substance. The SS became a proving ground for Himmler's romantic, grandiose, and sinister ideas and offered scope for him to exercise his pedantry and his proclivities for spying and informing. It became the vehicle through which his meanness, hardness, and vindictiveness found deadly expression. His rigid sense of duty and obedience turned him into a zealot carrying out Hitler's murderous ideology with fanatical "idealism." No wonder the SS's most distinctive insignia was to become the death's-head.

The SS began, as its name, *Schutzstaffel* (Defense Corps), indicates, as an armed formation within the SA to protect the Führer, top party leaders, and party meetings. It also gathered confidential information about suspect party members. When Himmler took it over, the SS had 280 members, while the SA, its parent body and the party's paramilitary organization, had some 60,000 members. Himmler decided not just to expand the SS, but to convert it into an elite brotherhood selected according to racial criteria, permeated with a racial mystique, imbued with medieval, clivalric concepts (loyalty, honor, bravery, and the like), using the symbols and practicing the rituals of Teutonism.

The appeal to "elitism" succeeded in recruiting into the SS a broader variety of men than the down-and-outers who had joined the SA. By the end of 1930 the SS had nearly three thousand members. The enmity between the SS and SA had then become so intense that Hitler had to step in. Fearing that the SA was or might become disloyal to him, Hitler threw his support to the SS, making it independent of the SA and even

giving permission for an SS black uniform to distinguish it from the SA's brown shirts. More important, Hitler expanded the SS's functions: "The task of the SS is primarily to carry out police duties within the party."⁴ The SS was thenceforth to be Hitler's vigilant force, blindly dedicated to him, unflinching in its loyalty. On induction, the SS man swore an oath: "I swear to you, Adolf Hitler, as Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and valor. I pledge to you and to the superiors whom you will appoint obedience unto death, so help me God."

To ensure the high racial quality of SS recruits and also to lay the groundwork for Germany's future racial policy as he saw it, Himmler set up in 1931 a *Rasse- und Siedlungsammt* (RuSA; Race and Settlement Office), later *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (RuSHA; Race and Settlement Main Office). To head it he appointed Richard Walther Darré, the author of the "blood and soil" doctrine, who had strongly influenced Himmler some years before. The RuSA had as its primary function the physical and racial screening of prospective SS candidates. After Himmler's Betrothal and Marriage Order of December 31, 1931, the RuSA also investigated the racial genealogy of the prospective brides of SS members. SS members who married without permission of Himmler and the RuSA were expelled from the organization. The ultimate goal of this procedure was to form a racially superior stock from which Germany's future leadership would come. (To encourage the bearing of racially valuable children, Himmler established within the SS in 1935 an organization called *Lebensborn*—Well of Life.)⁵ This racial elite would have to return to the soil for its vitality. The RuSA conducted an intensive racial and ideological indoctrination program along these lines and Darré tried to encourage SS families to settle in rural areas. Although this rural settlement program was of no practical consequence, it prefigures the more fanatical program, on a wholesale scale, that Himmler embarked on during the war, involving population transfers and rural resettlement on a racial basis, carried out in characteristic SS fashion.

Himmler's SS grew rapidly. When the Nazis came to power, it had fifty thousand members. On the eve of the war, it had nearly a quarter of a million. Most of these men belonged to the *Allgemeine SS* (General SS), which, as it expanded, came to be organized in about thirty regional divisions. The Allgemeine SS spun off two other formations: the *Verfügungstruppe* (Reserve or Special Troops) and the *Totenkopfverbände* (Death's-Head Units).

The Verfügungstruppe originated out of political standby squads, which served as an auxiliary police force ready to go into action at any threat to Hitler, at any order from Himmler. (The most famous unit was the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, set up in March 1933.) Aware of the

advantages of having his own military force, Himmler united these squads into the Verfügungstruppe, a sort of National Socialist army to be relied on in the event of treachery on the part of the regular army. In September 1934 it was accorded official status by a decree of the Defense Minister, permitting the SS to maintain "a standing armed force for such special internal political tasks as may be allotted to the SS by the Führer." By 1936 the Verfügungstruppe numbered ten thousand and even had its own cadet schools. Though service in the Verfügungstruppe under Nazi law counted as military service, the regular army resented it and until the outbreak of war refused to legitimate it as part of Germany's armed forces. On August 17, 1938, Hitler issued a secret directive clarifying the relationship between the Verfügungstruppe and the Wehrmacht in peacetime and in the event of war. The directive reaffirmed the military character of the Verfügungstruppe. In peacetime, under Himmler's command its units—which belonged neither to the Wehrmacht nor the police, but were a permanent armed formation of the NSDAP exclusively at Hitler's disposal—were to be available for "internal political tasks." But in the event of mobilization, the Verfügungstruppe could be used by the commander-in-chief of the army, and though remaining a branch of the NSDAP, its units would then be subject to army instructions and military law.

The Totenkopfverbände originated from the guard unit at Dachau, the first concentration camp in National Socialist Germany. When the Nazi came to power, "deprivation of freedom in the form of protective custody" became the order of the day, and by March 1933 the prisons could no longer hold the thousands arrested in "preventive" measures to eliminate "threats from subversive elements."⁶ Camps then were set up throughout Germany by Himmler in his capacity as head of the Bavaria police, the first at Dachau. By the summer of 1933 there were ten or more camps and detention centers, organized and operated by the SA, the SA, or the police, with over 25,000 inmates—Social Democrats, Communists, members of other opposition parties, journalists and writers (especially Jews), and various other "unpopular" categories.

In this early period, "wild improvisation," to use Martin Broszat's phrase, characterized the operation of the camps, but soon they came under Himmler's exclusive authority and were thenceforth removed from the control of the state's administrative and legal jurisdiction and operated outside the ordinary processes of law.

To reorganize the camps Himmler chose Theodor Eicke, an SS Oberführer (brigadier general), whom he had once committed to a psychiatric clinic, then released in June 1933 for appointment as commandant of Dachau. Eicke's hardness, ruthlessness, ideological commitment, and

exemplary organization of the camp, especially his systematization of "disciplinary camp regulations," won him advancement in May 1934 to reorganize the other camps and standardize their procedures. Eicke distinguished himself a month later by personally shooting Röhm, an act for which he was rewarded on July 4, 1934, with a new title of *Inspekteur der Konzentrationslager und Führer der SS-Wachverbände* (inspector of concentration camps and commander of SS guard units) and, a week later, with a promotion in rank.

Eicke's reorganization led to consolidation of the smaller camps into larger ones with uniform procedures and administration. By March 1935 there were 7 camps, with a prison population under 10,000 (Dachau, the largest, had 2,500 inmates). The guard units were enlarged, organized in battalions, and given their chilling designation as Totenkopfverbände. Thereafter, funds for the operation of the concentration camps and for Eicke's armed-guard units came from the budget of the Ministry of the Interior. Though the number of prisoners in protective custody in the next two years declined and the small camps were closed down, two new camps were built with a capacity as large as Dachau's—Buchtenwald and Sachsenhausen.

By the end of 1937 the Totenkopfverbände numbered five thousand men, in three formations that Himmler hoped to bring into his military establishment. But although the military had been forced to yield in some areas with regard to the Verfügungstruppe, they drew the line at the Totenkopfverbände, clearly an ideological organization that had no aspirations to acquire a spit-and-polish military character. After the war began, however, Himmler managed to bring some of Eicke's units into his SS army, and along with the Verfügungstruppe, these also took part in the military campaign in Poland. In mid-1940 the Verfügungstruppe, augmented by Totenkopfverbände units and police reinforcements, were redesignated as the *Waffen-SS* (Armed SS).

High in the hierarchy of terror was the SS's *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD; Security Service). It grew into a surveillance system that encompassed all Germany and then all occupied Europe, an evil organizational eye whose vigilance no one could escape. The SD was originally established, in accordance with Hitler's directive, in 1930, when the spy mania in the NSDAP was rampant. A security service was wanted not just to sniff out disloyalty and treachery in the tangle of intraparty intrigue that threatened Hitler's leadership, but also because the NSDAP was being infiltrated by spies from opposition parties and by police agents of the Weimar government. Himmler gave this new intelligence-gathering agency a modest name—*Unterabteilung Ic* (Ic Subdivision), "Ic" being army code for a

section dealing with enemy intelligence. To head this subdivision I appointed Reinhard Heydrich.

Heydrich, barely four years younger than Himmler, had, like him, been too young for service in World War I, but his patriotic military fervor found an outlet in his imagination. Years later he claimed he had been a runner in the *Freikorps* at fifteen.⁷ But it is not unlikely that at sixteen he did belong to some military or paramilitary group, perhaps a honor guard troop. During the war he is said to have developed "extreme Völkisch" ideas and turned into a "fanatic about pure race." He joined, or tried to join, various Völkisch, nationalist organizations in the immediate postwar years. He is said to have told a fellow cadet in the German navy some years later that he had once been a member of the *Deutsch-Völkische Schutz- und Trutzbund* (German-Völkisch Protective and Offensive Alliance), an aggressively anti-Semitic rightist, nationalist group. He joined, he said, because in his hometown of Halle his father was considered a Jew and called "Jew Süß." This injured his pride and honor; the only way to silence such talk, he thought, was to be active in anti-Semitic circles. That was why he joined the Schutz- und Trutzbund. The talk of Halle then took a different tack: the elder Heydrich could surely not be a Jew since his son was such a furious anti-Semite.

The story of Heydrich's alleged Jewish ancestry persisted during his lifetime and after. The genealogical facts are these: Heydrich's paternal grandmother was married twice. By her first husband, Reinhold Heydrich, she had many children, including Richard Bruno Heydrich, Reinhold's father. After Reinhold's death, she married a locksmith called Süß, an Evangelical-Lutheran with impeccable "Aryan" credentials. In later years "Süß" was sometimes appended to Bruno Heydrich's name. The Jewish attribution came about because Süß was commonly regarded as a Jew surname (for example, in Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Jud Süß*, published in 1926). Whatever his motivating impulse, Heydrich spent a good part of his adolescent years in anti-Semitic and Völkisch, nationalist circles where his identity as an uncompromising anti-Semite and Nazi was shaped.

He became a naval cadet in 1922 and in a few years had a promising career ahead of him. But early in 1931 he was cashiered from the navy because of scandals involving a woman. He then joined the Naval Academy, not that it offered the possibility of a career, but presumably because of ideological compatibility and the opportunity to continue to wear a military uniform. Since he was without a job or the possibility of one, he was cast about among friends and family for useful contacts and finally found a leading SA officer, who brought Heydrich to Himmler's attention. In appearance Heydrich was the Nordic dream, the "Blond Beast,"

described as a "young evil god of death." He was the embodiment of the SS ethos of "hardness," a man of action, whose deeds were intended to refute the gossip that he was of Jewish origin.* Hitler, in a eulogy at Heydrich's funeral, called him "the man with the iron heart." Ambitious, calculating, with an élan that the pedantic and cranky Himmler lacked, Heydrich was eventually to wield nearly as much power as Himmler himself. Indeed, within a year of his appointment, Heydrich rose rapidly to the rank of *Standartenführer* (colonel) and the Ic Subdivision emerged as the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) des *Reichsführers-SS* (Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS), foreshadowing the dreaded power it would exercise all over Europe.

The SD started out modestly. From Himmler's files and with a staff of three working in his own small apartment in Munich, Heydrich began to organize a card index of NSDAP opponents—those in the opposition parties, suspected spies within the Nazi party, antagonists in government posts, Jews and Catholics whose overt activities marked them as anti-Nazis. To combat these enemies (as well as to document and verify their enmity), Heydrich fashioned a network of espionage and counterespionage that in a short time enabled the SD to outdistance parallel and competing apparatus in the NSDAP and in the SA.

After the Nazi accession to power, the demarcation between state and party became blurred and even erased. In a few years the SS and SD usurped most police functions and entangled them in their own networks. The process began on March 9, 1933, when Himmler was appointed acting police president of Munich and Heydrich was put in charge of political security. A week later the entire Bavarian political police came under Himmler's charge. Within the year Himmler had managed to become head of the political police in all the states except Prussia, where Göring maintained his authority over the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*)—Secret State Police Office), established in April 1933. For some time Himmler tried to capture control of the Gestapo, and finally, in April 1934, the coveted Prussian police came into his hands. He then appointed Heydrich chief of the Gestapo. Now in control of all the police apparatus of the various German states, Himmler and Heydrich moved to consolidate their enhanced position in both party and state by undertaking to integrate the police organizations into the all-embracing network of the SS.⁸

* In mid-1932 the rumors of Heydrich's putative Jewish ancestry led to a party investigation that finally validated his "Aryan" origins. Himmler is believed even to have discussed the matter with Hitler. They held that Heydrich's fear of being branded a Jew was so excessive that he would be everlastingly grateful to them for letting him hold his high position in the party.

On June 9, 1934, Hitler formalized the transfer of all NSDAP intelligence services to the SD, declaring that there was to be no other party intelligence or counterespionage service. The following month Hitler further rewarded the SS for "the great services" it had rendered in connection with the purge of the SA: "I hereby promote the SS to the status of independent organization within the framework of the NSDAP." Having attained primacy and autonomy within the party, Himmler and Heydrich moved to attain similar status in the government. After two years of a power struggle in which Frick, Göring, and the civil administrators of the Gestapo were engaged, Hitler settled the matter by issuing a decree on June 17, 1935,⁹ which gave Himmler and Heydrich the authority they aspired to and which they had in fact in large measure already usurped. Himmler became, by decree, Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police and could now operate autonomously, for it became impossible to disentangle his power as Reichsführer-SS from his authority as Chief of the German Police. The whole police apparatus was now centralized, nationalized, and Nazified, a part of the SS and an instrument of the Führer's will.

A few days later Himmler undertook a basic reorganization of the police, setting up two main departments: the Main Office of the *Ordnungspolizei* (Orpo; Regular Police), under Police General Kurt Dalwege, at the Main Office of the *Sicherheitspolizei* (Sipo; Security Police), under Heydrich. Orpo comprised the uniformed urban and rural constabulary and the municipal police. Sipo consisted of the political police (Gestapo) and criminal police (Kripo). Thus the Gestapo, dealing with "enemies of the state," became separated from the regular police and was brought even closer to the party apparatus. The culmination of this process came with Himmler's decree of September 27, 1939, amalgamating Sipo and the SD into one organization under Heydrich, to be known as the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA; Reich Security Main Office). The merger of the state and party apparatuses was now "legally" complete, with Heydrich designated as Chief of Sipo and the SD (CSSD), a title paralleling Himmler's as Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police. From a minuscule body of 280 men in 1929, Himmler had built the SS into a mammoth organization of nearly a quarter of a million men, whose myriad institutions operated even beyond the pseudolegality of the National Socialist state. In a few years this complex SS network would become the instrumentality for the annihilation of the Jews.

When the National Socialists came to power, the state took over Jewish question and the SS remained satisfied for the time being to hold its interest in the Jewish question lodged in Heydrich's card file in

headquarters in Munich. Slowly the SD expanded in 1933, when two "specialists" were brought in, one for Catholic matters and one—a Major Walter Ilges—for "Jews and Freemasons." But in the first eighteen months after the accession to power the main thrust of SD activity was toward institutional expansion and consolidation of power. The SD's primary functions during that period were to assist Himmler in his drive to gain control of the police apparatuses in all the German states and to support, in the name of NSDAP security, the attack on the SA.

After June 1934, when the SA was eliminated as a contender for political power within the National Socialist movement, Heydrich began in earnest to expand the SD bureaucracy and simultaneously to penetrate the political police with SD personnel. The SD Main Office in Munich was enlarged to three departments. Within the department known as *SD-Inland* (domestic affairs), a separate desk for Jewish affairs (coded II-112) was set up with SS-Untersturmführer Leopold von Mildenstein in charge. Mildenstein hired Adolf Eichmann at the end of 1934 as his expert on Zionism, that niche in the bureaucracy coded II-1123. About a year later an ambitious research program got under way, with the gathering of data about prominent Jews in Germany and abroad.¹⁰ The Jewish press was monitored. Studies were prepared about the ORT, a worldwide Jewish organization promoting vocational education and training, and the *Agudat Israel*, a worldwide organization of Orthodox Jews. Other studies were under way and additional experts were put on. Besides Eichmann, who specialized in Zionism, there were desks for "assimilationists" and for "Orthodoxy and philanthropy." (According to Eichmann, his colleagues were Dieter Wisliceny and Theodore Dannecker, both of whom were to become his dedicated troubleshooters in organizing the deportation of the European Jews.)

A somewhat similar setup existed in the Gestapo in Berlin. In January 1934, when Göring still controlled the Gestapo, a desk for matters concerning "émigrés, Jews, Freemasons" was established in its Legal Department (coded II-F-2). It was directed by Karl Hasselbacher, a young lawyer whose experience in "Jewish" affairs had been obtained in the Ministry of the Interior, working on the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service.¹¹ After the Gestapo came under SS jurisdiction in April 1934, it underwent many changes, taking on, for one, a pseudo-military character with all the military titles and uniforms brought in by the new staff from the SD and SS. A thoroughgoing transformation was effected in the next few months when the previous five departments were consolidated into three, their staffs increased, and their scope enlarged. Its new Main Office, coded II, would become the keystone of the Gestapo. Its subdivision II-1 dealt with "enemies of the state" and was

headed jointly by two officials whom Heydrich had brought in from the Bavarian political police. (One, Heinrich Müller, made a big career in the Gestapo and later played a key role in the annihilation of the Jews. To distinguish him from other Heinrich Müllers in the Nazi galaxies, he became known as "Gestapo Müller.") Subsection II-1-B handled religious associations, Jews, Freemasons, and émigrés (expatriation and revocation of citizenship), and enjoying the services of two assistants.

As soon as he could, Heydrich tried to turn his card files and bureaucratic paper work to practical effect. Once he took over the Bavarian political police, he began to exploit its apparatus for ideological purposes. With regard to the Jews, his first act in this capacity was his order of July 19, 1933, affecting all Jewish organizations in Bavaria that were not purely religious or did not serve purely charitable purposes. He forbade them to continue their activities and ordered their property to be confiscated. Presumably he regarded such organizations as political and therefore actually or potentially hostile to the National Socialist state. Moreover, he may have felt that synagogues and Jewish charitable agencies were useful inasmuch as they segregated Jews from Germans. But the ban on other organizations did not continue very long. Heydrich had apparently concluded that police surveillance might serve his purpose better than suppression. Accordingly, in a decree dated March 20, 1933, he lifted the ban on the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* (Federation of Jewish War Veterans) and various Jewish student and sports organizations, allowing them to meet and conduct business.¹² Now, however, they were forbidden to pursue any political objectives and were subject to close police supervision. The police were to be given a list of members, including the place and date of their birth and their present residence (data that no doubt then found their way into the SD files of new members had to be cleared by the police; police were to be informed of the resignation or expulsion of members. Orders by the police authorities about administration, activity, and sports exercises were to be strictly obeyed. All meetings were monitored. Thus Heydrich began to draw a tight net of police supervision over the Jewish community.

Police surveillance of Jewish organizations soon became a standard procedure all over Germany. In Prussia, before Heydrich's time, Gestapo surveillance over the Jews had been limited to "legal" and economic matters, but it did not take long before the system that Heydrich had introduced in Bavaria was introduced there. Agreements were worked out between the Gestapo and the SD arranging for joint activities as well as separate jurisdictions. Spying on the Jewish organizations was one such cooperative undertaking.

Surveillance was useful since it provided jobs for otherwise unemployed NSDAP members and it increased the activity of the SD bureaucracy. Although it fulfilled an expressive purpose through its exercise of terror over the Jewish community, surveillance in itself served no instrumental purpose for the National Socialists. It provided no "solution" to the Jewish question.

After the spate of violence, the boycott, and the enactment of the exclusionary legislation in 1933, neither the German state nor the NSDAP appeared to have a clear-cut policy with regard to the Jews. In fact, some government agencies continued to deal with Jews in a correct, even courteous manner, according to the rules and regulations that had prevailed in Weimar. Emigration, for example, was handled by the *Reichswanderungsamt* (Reich Office of Migration), within the Ministry of the Interior. It was staffed mostly by officials who were not National Socialists, but had, before 1933, been members of the Catholic Center and other nonleftist parties. These bureaucrats continued to operate up to 1938 not only according to Weimar legality, but also with sympathetic understanding for the problems and priorities of the Jewish organizations in trying to foster a systematic program of emigration.¹³

Matters affecting Jews that were within the competence of the Ministry of Economy, also largely staffed with old-line government officials, were handled according to the habitual bureaucratic routine. A paradoxical example was the successful appeal, after initial prohibitions, by Jewish textile and clothing factories to obtain government contracts to produce goods for the armed services. The most significant instance of normal official procedures was the negotiations between the Ministry of Economy and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, concluding in the so-called "Haavara agreements" of August 1933. These were, in essence, a compromise on the issue of emigrants' blocked accounts. Under this arrangement Jews emigrating to Palestine deposited their assets in special blocked accounts in Germany, held by a Jewish trust company. Once in Palestine, the emigrant would be paid off half the amount in Palestine pounds. The other half was credited toward the purchase of finished German goods by the Jewish Agency, which paid half the cost in Palestine pounds. The Foreign Office, too, was involved in the implementation of the agreements over the years, and the officials there manifested similar courtesy and correctness, and sometimes even more.¹⁴

The Haavara agreements were not regarded as an ideological matter related to the Jewish question, but rather as a matter of the German economy. The arrangement was seen as boosting German production and German exports and discouraging a worldwide Jewish boycott of German goods. Hitler appeared to have no objections to the agreement, for he

made a neutral passing reference to it in a speech on October 24, 1933. As evidence that England was bad and Germany good, Hitler said that while England was hindering Jewish settlement in Palestine, Germany was aiding it, even to the extent of letting the emigrant take out of the country the currency required for the landing fee in Palestine.¹⁵

In 1934 it was widely held in Germany that the Jewish question had already been settled, though few people in the NSDAP leadership thought so. In the absence of clear-cut directives or guidelines, various ideas began to be bruited about in National Socialist circles about how to deal with the Jews. Goebbels, for one, seemed to be thinking along the lines of extending formal recognition of a ghettoized Jewish community. The idea no doubt derived from his experience with the *Kulturbund deutscher Juden*, an organization of Jewish actors, musicians, singers, and entertainers set up in 1933, after they had lost their jobs. The *Kulturbund* was formed to provide a means of livelihood for its members by arranging concerts, plays, and entertainment exclusively for the Jewish community. It was permitted to function under the supervision of a cultural commissar in Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, who evolved a policy that Goebbels pridefully called "Jewish cultural autonomy." The *Kulturbund* was not only encouraged to perform the works of Jewish writers and composers, but was forbidden to perform works by Germans and "Aryans." This *de facto* situation may have given rise to the thought of formalizing it in a *de jure* arrangement applying to the entire Jewish community. At the end of 1934, another official in Goebbels' ministry, Hans Friedrich Blunck, then president of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Reich Board of Literature), in an article in *Europäische Revue*, introduced that notion in a backhanded way. "The efforts of German literature," he wrote, "to achieve a concordat between the remaining Jewish population in the Reich and the government have been impeded again and again at the decisive moment by attacks from abroad." Presumably that sentence was a sort of trial balloon. Though the response in the Jewish press indicated cautious interest in the proposal, nothing further came of the idea. It may have been suppressed at a higher level in the National Socialist hierarchy, perhaps even by an angered reaction from Hitler.

The SS, for its part, continued to cast about for ideas that would provide a long-range solution to the Jewish question. In mid-1934 an SS report on this very subject remarked, with disappointment, that the "arr chair anti-Semites" were satisfied, now that the Jews had been pulled down a peg or two. It was consequently the responsibility of the party to devise an anti-Jewish policy that would "keep alive an awareness of the Jewish problem within the German people."¹⁷ The unknown writer (

the report rejected the exercise of further economic pressures on the Jews on the ground that that might arouse a foreign boycott of German goods. Next he explored the idea of mass Jewish emigration as an alternative, calling attention to the fact that among German Jews, only the Zionists advocated emigration and only they acknowledged that Jews could not truly be Germans. The reporter then proposed, as a desirable program, that the National Socialists give official preference to those Jewish organizations that promoted Jewish nationalism and separatism, while also encouraging those activities that prepared Jews for emigration.

Precisely such official encouragement was extended by the Bavarian political police, when Heydrich issued a directive to all police offices in the state on January 28, 1935: "The activity of the Zionist-oriented youth organizations that are engaged in the occupational restructuring of the Jews for agriculture and manual trades prior to their emigration to Palestine lies in the interest of the National Socialist state's leadership." These organizations, therefore, "are not to be treated with that strictness that it is necessary to apply to the members of the so-called German-Jewish organizations (assimilationists)." 18

By spring, this approach had been legitimated, according to a directive of April 1935 that asserted that "the attempts of German-Jewish organizations to persuade Jews to remain in Germany" directly contradicted National Socialist principles and were to be prevented. The Jewish press, too, was to be monitored "to see that the more subtle forms of this propaganda are not disseminated." 19 One way the policy was executed was to deny permission to speakers to address public Jewish gatherings if they were known to advocate a Jewish presence in Germany. Persons who did express such views were often brought to the Gestapo for interrogation and threatened with detention in a concentration camp.

On May 15, 1935, the *Schwarze Korps*, official organ of the SS, supported this policy as the correct ideological posture for Nationalist Socialists. The Jews, it was argued, had to be separated into two categories—Zionists and assimilationists: "The Zionists adhere to a strict racial position and by emigrating to Palestine they are helping to build their own Jewish state." But the assimilationists were objectionably tenacious: "The assimilation-minded Jews deny their race and insist on their loyalty to Germany or claim to be Christians, because they have been baptized, in order to subvert National Socialist principles." 20

The enactment of the Nuremberg Laws encouraged this approach. The Zionists and proponents of emigration to Palestine were less badgered in their activities by the police and the SD than the non-Zionists. Pressure was constantly exerted on Jewish communal leaders to pursue a policy of

emigration, especially to Palestine. Removal of the Jews from Germany, *Entjudung* (de-Jewification) of Germany, seemed to have become the SS policy in the period between 1935 and 1938. Nevertheless, it was in no way official National Socialist policy and did not affect the routine bureaucratic procedures of the Reichswanderungsamt. The Haavara agreements were regarded with favor in SD circles as an incentive to Jewish emigration, but the *Auslandsorganisation*, the NSDAP branch dealing with Germans living abroad, strongly opposed it because it gave "valuable support for the formation of a Jewish national state with the help of German capital." 21

Hitler issued no definitive statement in support of the SS policy of encouraging the Zionists and emigration to Palestine, apart from that reference in his speech in October 1933. Yet if Eichmann had read *Mein Kampf* (at his trial he admitted he never had), he would have seen that making a distinction between Zionists and assimilationists was not likely to win Hitler's approval. For Hitler had asserted that there was no difference when he had studied them in Vienna: "This apparent struggle between Zionist and liberal Jews disgusted me; for it was false through and through, founded on lies." Furthermore, Hitler had little regard for Palestine as a Jewish state. He referred to Palestine only once in *Mein Kampf*, expressing the view that the Jews never intended to build a state for the purpose of living there: ". . . All they want is a central organization for their international world swindle, endowed with its own sovereign rights and removed from the intervention of other states: a haven for convicted scoundrels and a university for budding crooks."

The international complications of Jewish settlement in Palestine and of Arab opposition do not seem to have become apparent to Hitler until 1937, when Palestinian Arabs first turned to the Germans for help against the Jewish settlement. In mid-1937 Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath began to formulate a policy on Palestine along the lines of *Mein Kampf*, asserting that the creation of a Jewish state was not in Germany's interest, because it would create a position of power for "international Jewry somewhat like the Vatican State for political Catholicism or Moscow for the Comintern." Hitler was apparently undecided, trying to reconcile the conflicting interests of his ministries with his own ideological views. Though he himself did not put anything down on paper, a government official reported in July 1937 that Hitler had concluded that Jewish emigration should be concentrated on Palestine, because this would create "only one center of Jewish trouble in the world," which Germany could oppose by concerted countermeasures.²² It may be no more than mere coincidence that about this time a Gestapo official who supervised Jewish

organizations told a Jewish leader that the Gestapo did not like to have the Jews emigrate to America, but preferred Palestine, because "there we will catch up with you."²³

By 1937 Eichmann had developed the idea that all matters relating to Jewish emigration should be centralized in one agency, and he adumbrated the idea of forced emigration, in actuality a policy of expulsion, as an expression of the German people's wrath against the Jews. That idea appealed to Heydrich, and in a short time it would become official policy.

The SD meanwhile still searched for an ideological or theoretical basis for an ongoing anti-Jewish policy for the National Socialist state. In a report of August 28, 1936, SS-Oberscharführer Schröder, Eichmann's superior at that time, described the work of his section with regard to the problem of arriving at an encompassing National Socialist definition of the concept of "Jewry as an enemy of the State and Party."²⁴ Schröder elaborated:

The Jew already as a person is a 100 percent enemy of National Socialism, as proven by the difference in his race and nationality. Wherever he tries to transmit his work, his influence, and his world outlook to the non-Jewish world, he discharges it in hostile ideologies, as we find it in Liberalism, especially in Freemasonry, in Marxism, and not least also in Christianity. These ideologies then accord with a broader concept of Jewish mentality.

He concluded that the correct method of combatting Jewry demanded sober judgment rather than the "fantastic notions of well-known, so-called anti-Semites," an idea reminiscent of Hitler's earliest statement on anti-Semitism, his letter to Gemlich in September 1919. Here, then, was the germ of the idea that the Jew, simply by being a Jew and thereby an enemy of the "Aryan" and hence of the National Socialist movement, would automatically become an enemy of the National Socialist state. The ideological concept was being transformed into a legal one.

Himmler, too, was developing the idea of the Jew as an enemy of the state, less in a legal sense than in a combative sense. Early in 1937, in a lecture to the Wehrmacht on the nature and purpose of the SS, he spelled out the idea that "the enemy in a war is an enemy not only in the military sense, but also an ideological enemy."²⁵ A few months earlier he described the methods with which the SS would defend Germany against this enemy:

We shall unremittably fulfill our task, to be the guarantors of the internal security of Germany, just as the Wehrmacht guarantees the safety of the honor, the greatness, and the peace of the Reich from the outside. We shall

take care that never more in Germany, the heart of Europe, can the Jewish-Bolshevistic revolution of subhumans be kindled internally or by emissaries from abroad. Pitilessly we shall be a merciless executioner's sword for all these forces whose existence and doings we know . . . whether it be today, or in decades, or in centuries.²⁶

Thus, at a time when talk of war was becoming the everyday rhetoric of National Socialist Germany, the SS, too, despite the careful paperwork of the SD, began increasingly to talk of war against the ideological enemy.



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The Einsatzgruppen — Mobile Killing Units

From the mid-1300's, Jews had begun to concentrate in a large strip of eastern European territory known as the "Pale of the Settlement." By 1900, there were, perhaps, as many as 7 million Jews living in this area bounded by Germany on the east, the Baltic sea on the north, the Black Sea on the south and the Dnieper River in Russia on the east. The Jewish population of Poland in 1939 was about 3.3 million with an additional 2.1 million in the occupied Russian provinces. There were also heavy concentrations of Jews in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to the north and Hungary and the Slavic states to the south.


Anti-Semitism had long been evident in Poland. Jews were not considered Poles and, as in Nazi Germany, were defined as a race. It appears that, until 1939, Poland saw its destiny as tied to Germany's and its policies toward Jews mirrored those of Germany -- forced emigration. This was all to change with the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. The consequences of this invasion were disastrous for Poland as a nation and, especially for Poland's Jewish population.

Immediately following the invasion, Heinrich Himmler was appointed to take measures to strengthen German ethnicity in the occupied territories and to create lebensraum, or living space for German citizens. To this end, Himmler created special task forces within the SS, the *Einsatzgruppen*, and placed them under the command of Reinhard Heydrich. On September 21, 1939, Heydrich instructed those under his command to observe a distinction between the "final aim," which would take some time and "the steps necessary for reaching it which can be applied more or less at once." The *Einsatzgruppen* became "mobile killing units" charged with liquidating all political enemies of the Reich. According to historian, Raul Hilberg, the mobile killing units murdered 1.4 million Jews between 1941 and the end of the war in 1945.

Source: The Holocaust/Shoah Page.

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**The Jewish Student Online
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Heydrich's Instructions to Chief's of Einsatzgruppen



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The Chief of the Security Police
Berlin: September 21, 1939
SECRET

To: Chiefs of all Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police
Subject: Jewish question in the occupied territory

I refer to the conference held in Berlin today and once more point out that the planned overall measures (i.e., the final aim) are to be kept strictly secret.

Distinction must be made between:

- (1) The final aim (which will require extended periods of time), and
- (2) The stages leading to the fulfillment of this final aim (which will be carried out in short terms).

The planned measures demand the most thorough preparation in their technical as well as economic aspects.

It is obvious that the tasks that lie ahead cannot be laid down in full detail from here. The instructions and guidelines below will at the same time serve the purpose of urging the chiefs of the Einsatzgruppen to give the matter their practical thought.

I

For the time being, the first prerequisite for the final aim is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside into the larger cities. This is to be carried out with all speed.

In doing so, distinction must be made:

- (1) between the areas of Danzig and West Prussia, Posen, Eastern Upper Silesia, and
- (2) the rest of the occupied territories. (1)

As far as possible, the area mentioned (in item 1) is to be cleared of Jews; at least the aim should be to establish only a few cities of concentration.

In the areas mentioned in item 2, as few concentration points as possible are to be set up, so as to facilitate subsequent measures.

In this conjunction, it is to be borne in mind that only cities which are rail junctions, or at least are located along railroad lines are to be designated as concentration points.

On principal, Jewish communities of fewer than 500 persons are to be dissolved and to be transferred to the nearest city of concentration.

This decree does not apply to the area of Einsatzgruppe 1, which is situated east of Cracow and is bounded roughly by Polanico, Jaroslaw, the new line of demarcation, and the former Slovak-Polish border. Within this area, only an improvised census of Jews is to be carried out. Furthermore, Councils of Jewish Elders, as discussed below, are to be set up.

II

Councils of Jewish Elders [Jüdische Ältestenräte]

(1) In each Jewish community, a Council of Jewish Elders is to be set up, to be composed, as far as possible, of the remaining influential personalities and rabbis. The council is to comprise up to 24 male Jews (depending on the size of the Jewish community).

The council is to be made fully responsible, in the literal sense of the word, for the exact punctual execution of all directives issued or yet to be issued.

(2) In case of sabotage of such instructions, the councils are to be warned of the severest measures.

(3) The Jewish councils are to take an improvised census of the Jews in their local areas - broken down if possible by sex (age groups): a) up to 16 years of age, b) from 16 to 20 years of age, and c) over, as well as by principal occupation groups - and are to report the results in the shortest possible time.

(4) The Councils of Elders are to be informed of the dates and deadlines for departure, departure facilities, and finally departure routes. They are then to be made personally responsible for the departure of the Jews from the countryside.

The reason to be given for the concentration of the Jews into the cities is that Jews have most influentially participated in guerrilla attacks and plundering actions.

(5) The Councils of Elders in the cities of concentration are to be made responsible for appropriately housing the Jews moving in from the countryside.

For general reasons of security, the concentration of Jews in the cities will probably necessitate orders altogether barring Jews from certain sections of cities, or, for example, forbidding them to leave the ghetto (2) or go out after a designated evening hour, etc. However, economic necessities are always to be considered in this connection.

(6) The Councils of Elders are also to be made responsible for appropriate provisioning of the Jews during the transport to the cities.

No objections are to be voiced in the event that migrating Jews take their movable possessions with them, to the extent that this is technically possible.

(7) Jews who do not comply with the order to move into the cities are to be allowed a short additional period of grace where circumstances warrant. They are to be warned of strictest punishment if they should fail to comply with this latter deadline.

III

On principal, all necessary measures are always to be taken in closest accord and cooperation with the German civil administration agencies and locally competent military authorities.

In carrying them out, care must be taken that the economic security of the occupied territories not be impaired.

(1) Above all, the needs of the army must be considered.

For example, for the time being it will hardly be possible to

avoid leaving behind some Jew traders here and there, who in the absence of other possibilities simply must stay for the sake of supplying the troops. In such cases, however, prompt Aryanization of these enterprises is to be sought and the emigration of the Jews is to be completed later, in accord with the locally competent German administrative authorities.

(2) For the preservation of German economic interests in the occupied territories, it is obvious that Jewish-owned essential or war industries and enterprises, as well as those important for the Four Year Plan, must be kept up for the time being.

In these cases also, prompt Aryanization is to be sought, and the emigration of the Jews is to be completed later.

(3) Finally, the food situation in the occupied territories must be taken into consideration. For instance, as far as possible, real estate owned by Jewish settlers is to be provisionally entrusted to the care of neighboring German or even Polish farmers, to be worked by them together with their own, so as to assure harvesting of the crops still in the fields or renewed cultivation. With regard to this important question, contact is to be made with the agricultural expert of the Chief of the Civil Administration.

(4) In all cases in which the interests of the Security Police on one hand and those of the German Civil Administration on the other hand cannot be reconciled, I am to be informed in the fastest way before the particular measures in question are to be carried out, and my decision is to be awaited.

IV

The chiefs of the Einsatzgruppen will report to me continuously on the following matters:

(1) Numerical survey of the Jews present in their territories (broken down as indicated above, if possible). The numbers of Jews who are being evacuated from the countryside and of those who are already in the cities are to be reported separately.

(2) Names of the cities which have been designated as concentration points.

(3) Deadlines set for the Jews to migrate to the cities.

(4) Survey of all Jewish-owned essential or war industries and enterprises, as well as those important for the Four Year Plan, within their areas.

If possible, the following should be specified:

a. Kind of enterprise (also statement on possible conversion into enterprises that are truly essential or war related, or important for the Four Year Plan);

b. Which of these enterprises need to be Aryanized most promptly (in order to forestall any kind of loss)?

What kind of Aryanization is suggested? German or Poles? (This decision depends on the importance of the enterprise.)

c. How large is the number of Jews working in these enterprises (including leading positions)?

Can the enterprise simply be kept up after the removal of the Jews, or will such continued operation require assignment of German or Polish workers? On what scale?

Insofar as Polish workers have to be introduced, care should be taken that they are mainly brought in from the former German provinces, so as to begin the weeding out of the Polish element there. These questions can be carried out only through involvement and participation of the German labor offices which have been set up.

V

For the attainment of the goals set, I expect total deployment of all forces of the Security Police and the Security Service.

The chiefs of neighboring Einsatzgruppen are to establish contact with each other immediately so that the territories concerned will be covered completely.

VI

The High Command of the Army, the Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan (Attention: Secretary of State Neumann), the Reich Ministries of the Interior (Attention: Secretary of State Stuckart), for Food and for Economy (Attention: Secretary of State Landfried), as well as the Chiefs of Civil Administration of the Occupied Territory have all received copies of this decree.

//Signed// Heydrich

(1) The areas of Danzig, West Prussia, Posen, and Eastern Upper Silesia were to be incorporated into Germany, whereas the rest of the occupied territory of Poland would comprise the Generalgouvernement.

(2) **This appears to be the earliest reference to the German plan to establish ghetto's in which to confine the Jews.**

Sources: Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *A Holocaust Reader*. West Orange: Behrman. 1976, pp. 59-64 and Electric Zen: An Einsatzgruppen Electronic Repository.

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The Mobile Killing Squads

After the German army invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, a new stage in the Holocaust began. Under cover of war and confident of victory, the Germans turned from the forced labor and imprisonment of Jews to mass murder. Special action squads, or *Einsatzgruppen*, made up of Nazi (SS) units and police, moved with speed on the heels of the advancing German army. Their job was to kill any Jews they could find in the occupied Soviet territory. Some residents of the occupied regions, mostly Ukrainians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, aided these German mobile killing squads by serving as auxiliary police.

The mobile killing units acted swiftly, taking the Jewish population by surprise. They would enter a town or city and rounded up all Jewish men, women, and children. They also took Communist party leaders and Roma (Gypsies). Victims were forced to surrender any valuables, remove their clothing, which was later sent for use in Germany or distributed to local collaborators. Then the killing squad members marched their victims to open fields, forests, and ravines on the outskirts of conquered towns and cities. There they shot them or gassed them in gas chambers and dumped the bodies into mass graves.





On September 21, 1941, the eve of the Jewish New Year, a mobile killing squad entered a small town in what is now Lithuania. The killing squad members herded 4,000 Jews town and the surrounding region into three synagogues, where they were held for two da food or water. Then, in two days of killing, Jewish men, women, and children were cemeteries, lined up in front of open pits, and shot to death. Today there are no Jews in Ej was one of hundreds of cities, towns, and shtetls whose Jews were murdered during the The rich culture of most of these Jewish communities was lost forever.

The killing squads murdered more than a million Jews and hundreds of thousands of othe people. At Babi Yar, near Kiev, about 34,000 Jews were murdered in two days of shooti few people in the general population helped their Jewish neighbors escape. Most people w that they too might be killed.

The massacres of innocent men, women, and children in Babi Yar and other towns we crimes of hoodlums or crazy men. The executioners were "ordinary" men who followed of their commanding officers. Many of the killers had wives and children back in Propaganda and training had taught many members of the mobile killing squads to victims as enemies of Germany. Some killers drank heavily to dull their thoughts and fe addition, when they described their actions they used code words like "special treat "special action" instead of "killing" or "murder" to distance themselves from their terrible

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Hitler's Willing Executioners:

Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, Vintage Books.

New York, 1997

4

THE NAZIS' ASSAULT ON THE JEWS: ITS CHARACTER AND EVOLUTION

ALTHOUGH HITLER and the Nazis' eliminationist desire was, even before their ascension to power, clear and constant, the evolution of their immediate intentions and actual policies towards the Jews was not linear and unambiguous. This is not surprising. A regime had come to power determined to undertake a task—the elimination not only of Jews from all spheres of social life in Germany but also of their putative capacity to harm Germany—that was enormously complex and difficult, and that was without precedent in modern times. It was a task, no less, that had to be carried out under a variety of constraints and concurrently with competing, if not conflicting, goals. The Nazis had assumed power under trying circumstances in the middle of a depression, beset by hostile outside powers and with a number of revanchist and revolutionary goals in mind. To expect any regime, especially when operating in this setting, to have pursued the goal of eliminating Jewry from Germany, from Europe, from the world, without any twists and turns of policy, without any tactical compromises, without pragmatic adjustments, without deferring long-term goals in favor of short- or medium-term gains in other areas, is to have unrealistic expectations of the nature of governance. It is to attribute to the Nazis a prodigious capacity to carry their ideals into practice, their preferences into policy outcomes.

The course of the Nazis' assault on the Jews inevitably did not conform to this idealized, caricatured view of how preferences are turned into policy. Their anti-Jewish policy was indeed characterized by seeming inconsistencies

and by conflicts among competing loci of deliberation and of power. Focusing on the manifest policies, however, has led some to conclude that the evolution of the Nazis' policy was incoherent, that no one was in control, that the decision to annihilate the Jews was but the outgrowth of unwanted, contingent exigencies, had little to do with the intentions of the Nazi leadership or of Hitler, and was not organic to the Nazis' worldview. These views are erroneous. Nazi policy towards the Jews was eminently coherent and goal-directed.

The Nazis based their intentions and policies throughout on an articulated, shared understanding of Jews, namely their eliminationist, racial antisemitism. When it is recognized that the eliminationist ideology—which provided a diagnosis of the perceived problem and which implied a variety of possible practical “solutions” to it—underlay the Nazis' thinking and actions, then the contours of their policies towards Jews appear far less enigmatic, far more deliberate, far easier to understand for what they were: *a concerted yet flexible and necessarily experimental attempt, born of conscious intent, to eliminate putative Jewish power and influence as thoroughly and finally as possible*. It was conscious because it was openly and frequently articulated, concerted because it was pursued consistently and devotedly by so many people, experimental and flexible because of the unmapped territory within which, and the practical constraints under which, the Germans had to conceive, forge, and execute the policy. In fact, in light of all of the constraints and uncertainties governing the policies, the Nazis were *remarkably consistent*, more consistent than it has generally been recognized in recent scholarship, more consistent than might reasonably have been expected.

Demonstrating this *and* making sense of the Nazis' anti-Jewish policies require that some issues be reconceived and a new interpretive framework be used.¹ So before examining the evolution of Nazi policy towards Jews, some conceptual and analytical issues need to be addressed briefly. The notion of “intentionality,” the relationship of Hitler to his followers, and the manner of assessing the degree to which a set of actions are consistent—important matters all—have been, and are likely to continue to be, subjects of explicit and implicit dispute, so it is worth pausing over them for clarification.

Germany during the Nazi period had a political system that was both dictatorial and consensual, dictatorial in that no formal mechanisms—such as elections—existed to check Hitler's power or to remove him from office, consensual in that the people who staffed the institutions of the political system, as well as the broader German public by and large, accepted the system and Hitler's authority as desirable and legitimate.² Within this broad consensus, differences and conflicts over many issues, including Jewish policy, existed within the political system, for three principal reasons. First, constraints were real, leading to compromise steps and the deferral of policy preferences until

propitious circumstances appeared or could be created. Second, Hitler's often non-interventionist leadership style created a great deal of leeway for subordinates, often in different institutions and with somewhat different ideas, to design the policies.³ The third reason was the natural tensions and inconsistencies that emerge whenever a new, difficult, nationwide enterprise is undertaken in which competitive institutions (in this case, with confused and overlapping jurisdictions) within the political system participate without a central (let alone powerful) organ of control.⁴

Finally, regarding Nazi Jewish policy, as if these three features of the political system did not already promise to produce inconsistency, the eliminationist ideology was compatible with a variety of “solutions,” and virtually all of them were unprecedented and difficult to implement. All of this led the people fashioning and executing the anti-Jewish policy, the central tenets of which they agreed upon, to vary on the details of the policy, on how the policy was to be pursued in light of other policy goals, on which aspects of it were to be treated as short-, medium-, or long-term features, and on the speed with which each such portion ought to be introduced. It is no wonder that the Nazis groped towards the “solution” to their “Jewish Problem.”

These features of the Nazi system complicate the attempt to understand what the Nazis' intentions were for disposing of German and European Jews and, whatever their intentions were, what considerations moved them to adopt the actual policies and measures that they chose. The current prevailing analytical strategy for addressing these issues has been to build a plausible developmental sequence, not only of policies but also of intentions, which is based on the measures that were being pursued *at each moment*, and at what the various protagonists seemed to have known about the intentions behind the measures. Every stage of this sequence is then explained by the political, institutional, territorial, and military configurations of the moment, which are understood to have been shaping the intentions and actions of the relevant actors. This method reveals much about the micro- and meso-level conceptualizations and deeds of the actors, yet when not supplemented by a broader interpretive framework, it produces conclusions that are biased towards situational and material factors, that tend greatly to overplay the significance of tertiary deviations from the general thrust of policy, and that lose sight of the overall character of Nazism and the Nazis' eliminationist Jewish policy. Ground-level perspectives are highly instructive—and necessary—but they are only a supplement to, not a substitute for, the aerial overview.

Keeping these interpretive and explanatory difficulties in mind, the approach here is grounded in the following:

Any evaluation of these events must begin with Hitler. However much more we would like to know about Hitler's deliberations and role, it is

nonetheless clear that Hitler, having made the crucial decisions himself, was the prime mover of the persecution that culminated in genocide.⁵ Moreover, two things can be said with certainty. First, Hitler never wavered from his eliminationist precepts and intent, which he articulated publicly already on August 13, 1920, in a speech, "Why Are We Antisemites?" To his listeners he proclaimed that the first step is to recognize the Jews' nature, following upon which an organization must arise "which one day will proceed with the deed; and our resolve to execute that deed is unshakably firm. It is called: The removal of the Jews from our Volk."⁶ Second, Hitler's "unshakable" constancy provided the framework for German policy towards the Jews. (He never seriously considered or proposed that Germans could live together in harmonious peace with Jews.) The constancy of Hitler's eliminationist resolve is not surprising in light of his early and unchanging evaluation of the severity of the Jewish threat. The danger was so great—as he declared in 1920 at a public meeting before 1,200 people—that he would shrink from nothing in order to get rid of the Jews. He declared ominously, "... we are animated with an inexorable resolve to seize the Evil [the Jews] by the roots and to exterminate (*auszurotten*) it root and branch. To attain our aim we should stop at nothing, even if we must join forces with the Devil."⁷ Hitler was proclaiming, in stating his willingness to "join forces with the Devil," that he would do whatever was necessary, even adopt highly unconventional and tabooed means, in his quest to eliminate the Jews. Hitler's use of the idiom of total extermination was anything but a slip of the tongue. The central question, then, is: How did Hitler give his constant eliminationist intent concrete formulations for action in light of changing opportunities and constraints and of his own competing values and goals?

If the issues at hand are to be fathomed, then a set of distinctions must be made and kept in mind. "Ideals" are the optimal images a person has of what is desirable in a world unencumbered by the constraints of social and physical existence. "Intentions" are the real-world plans that people formulate under a variety of real or possible conditions and constraints. "Policies" are the courses of action that a person actually decides upon at a specific moment for a given set of existing conditions and constraints. None necessarily reflects either of the others perfectly. Unless blocked by barriers, a person's intentions tend to follow his ideals, and his actions, namely the policies he pursues, tend to be formulated in order to achieve his intentions. Nevertheless, ideals often are wildly at odds with any achievable reality. Intentions, therefore, often approximate the ideals on which they are based but poorly, because a person makes reasonable concessions to reality. And policies often barely reflect intentions, not to mention ideals, because the formulation of courses of action must make still greater concessions to reality than even the formulation of prudential intentions. Moreover, policies may be formulated

with a variety of competing ideals and intentions in mind, in which case it might seem that certain existing, even determined intentions might not be held by the person. It is thus possible for someone to have an ideal of a world free of Jewish influence, to have the fervent intention of bringing about such a world when propitious conditions develop, yet to pursue policies, even changing policies, that do not promise to effect such change because he judges the achievement of the ideal, the fulfillment of the intention, as simply not feasible for the moment. For a person to bide his time, while pursuing a set of interim or less than wholly satisfactory policies, is a rational, prudent response to insurmountable obstacles. Such a course of action is not incompatible with holding such ideals and ultimate intentions. It thus fails to constitute evidence for the absence of either.

In light of this, the following can be said about the overall course of the Germans' persecution and slaughter of the Jews: Hitler was the driving force behind the anti-Jewish policy. In the first few years of his rule, he settled for compromise "solutions" to the "Jewish problem" because of the apparent immediate or even long-term impossibility of "solving" it as he might have wished. All of the "solutions" that he and his subordinates pursued derived directly and immediately from the same diagnosis of the problem, as articulated by his eliminationist racial antisemitism in one of the most frequently intoned slogans of any kind during the Nazi years: "Jew perish." The Germans' policies towards Jews were but variations on the common eliminationist theme. Although the variations produced enormously different consequences for the victims, they were rough functional equivalents from the vantage point of the perpetrators: They had the same meaning for the perpetrators and sprang from the same motive, which is the crucial element for explaining the course of the persecution. The same cultural cognitive model of Jews informed them all, and this model provided the rationale, the fearsome energy, and the essential direction for all of the measures.

Distilling the essence from the broad array of the Germans' policies towards German and European Jews reveals that the policies shared two important features and objectives:

1. To turn the Jews into "socially dead" beings—beings that were violently dominated, natally alienated, and generally dishonored—and, once they were, to treat them as such.⁸
2. To remove the Jews as thoroughly and permanently from social and, as far as possible, from physical contact with the German people, and thereby to neutralize them as a factor in German life.

These two features were constant components of the Germans' Jewish policy, whatever the actual measures were. The belief in the desirability of these goals composed the anti-Jewish policy's axioms, its underlying cognitive model.

The implementation of these objectives included a number of changing policies and measures, some of which overlapped temporarily. They included:

1. Verbal assault.
2. Physical assault.
3. Legal and administrative measures to isolate Jews from non-Jews.
4. Driving them to emigrate.
5. Forced deportation and "resettlement."
6. Physical separation in ghettos.
7. Killing through starvation, debilitation, and disease (prior to the formal genocidal program).
8. Slave labor as a surrogate for death.
9. Genocide, primarily by means of mass shootings, calculated starvation, and gassing.
10. Death marches.

None of the Germans' major policies towards the Jews was divorced from either of the two central objectives of the anti-Jewish policy: producing the "social death" of Jews and removing their presence and influence from the German dominion. Nevertheless, three policies stand out as having contributed simultaneously and symbiotically to both objectives: the verbal assault on Jews, the physical assault upon them, and the legal and administrative restrictions placed upon them. Certainly, by 1939 the Germans had succeeded in rendering the Jews socially dead within German society.

The most consistent, frequently acted upon, and pervasive German governmental policy was one which, although recognized and discussed, is rarely analyzed as having been an integral feature of the Germans' anti-Jewish policy. Constant, ubiquitous, antisemitic vituperation issued from Germany's public organs, ranging from Hitler's own speeches, to never-ending installments in Germany's radio, newspapers, magazines, and journals, to films, to public signage and verbal fusillades, to schoolbooks. The effect of this incessant antisemitic barrage upon Germans' cognitions about Jews has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Here it is worth pausing to emphasize its political and social purpose. It was above all an expressive act, the statement of Hitler's and his followers' innermost beliefs, which included a declaration of their intent to free Germany from the Jews' putative destructive yoke. This verbal violence was meant to be heard not only by Germans but also by Jews. Its intent was to buttress the Germans' beliefs and to terrorize the Jews. These terrorizing measures served the emotionally satisfying purpose of plunging the Jews into fear and the programmatic goal of inducing them to leave Germany and, it was hoped, once gone, to leave it alone. The verbal assault contributed, as much as any other policy, to transforming the

Jews into socially dead beings, beings who were seen to be owed few if any moral obligations by Germans and who were conceived of as being thoroughly dishonorable, indeed incapable of bearing honor. One Jewish survivor records this aspect of Nazi policy during the aftermath of the April 1 boycott: "The barrage of propaganda was directed against the Jews with undiminished vehemence and intensity. In ceaseless repetitions, it was hammered into the heads of the readers and listening audience that the Jews were subhuman creatures and the source of all evil. . . ." "Perpetrating verbal violence upon the Jews was an integral part of both of the major Hitlerian objectives of rendering the Jews socially dead (thus preparing Germans for still more drastic eliminationist measures) and, by inducing them to emigrate, of reducing their influence over Germany.

A second policy pursued throughout the life of Nazism, though in the 1930s only intermittently, was the assault upon the Jews' bodies. The regime perpetrated, encouraged, or tolerated violence against Jews, which in the 1940s became part of the Jews' everyday existence, could erupt at any moment even during the 1930s. It took the form sometimes of impromptu physical attacks and ritualistic degradation by local officials, and sometimes of centrally organized campaigns of violence, terror, and incarceration in concentration camps. As has already been discussed, the physical assaults, similar to the verbal violence, announced to everyone that the Jews were beyond the moral community, and that they would best absent themselves from Germany. The assaults also suggested the dire fate that might await the Jews.

A third German policy towards the Jews was the ever-increasing, legally and administratively promulgated social separation of Jews from Germans. Of all of the policies, this was the most closely related non-verbal analogue to the verbal violence; unlike most of the anti-Jewish measures that they eventually adopted, Germans put this into effect almost from the moment of the Nazis' assumption of power and never relented from this program, which they intensified as the 1930s and 1940s wore on. The progress of the gradual, systematic exclusion of Jews from all spheres of society—the political, social, economic, and cultural—was as grinding as the hardship that it created for Jews was punishing.¹⁰ The Germans began to exclude Jews from governmental service one week after the April 1, 1933, boycott, with the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 7, and from many of the professions in the ensuing weeks.¹¹ The Germans' exclusion of Jews from the economy proceeded throughout the first years of the regime as the economic health of the country permitted, and then with increased vigor in 1938.¹² On September 22, 1933, the Germans removed Jews from the cultural spheres and the press, which many deemed to be especially "poisoned" by Jews. During the life of the regime, the Germans proscribed vir-

tually all aspects of general Jewish intercourse with Germans, as well as important Jewish religious practices, publishing a deluge of restrictive laws regulating what Jews might or might not do. They prohibited Jewish ritual slaughter soon after the Nazi era began on April 21, 1933, which, because it was a defining practice of Jewry, could be understood only as a declaration that Jewishness itself was a violation of the order and moral norms of society. All told, Germans witnessed the promulgation of almost two thousand laws and administrative regulations that degraded and immiserated the country's Jews, in a manner and degree that no minority in Europe had suffered for hundreds of years.¹³

The signal legal event in this tightening chain of restrictions was the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, which together with subsequent decrees defined legally who was a Jew, providing for the first time a clear national understanding of which people were to be subject to the laws and decrees regulating Jews. Faithful to the racial foundation of the dominant worldview and understanding of Jews, the definitional criteria relied essentially upon bloodlines and not religious identity. Thus, the laws of Germany deemed to be Jews those people who (owing to their or their parents' conversions) were Christians if a requisite portion of their ancestry was Jewish—no matter that they might have no psychological or other social identification with things Jewish.¹⁴ The Nuremberg Laws also stripped Jews of citizenship and, with enormous symbolic as well as practical import, proscribed new marriages and extramarital sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews. All of the laws, regulations, and measures of the 1930s served to rob Jews of their livelihoods, to sink them into a state of hopelessness, and to isolate them from the larger society in which they had moved freely but a few years earlier. They made Jews socially dead.

Starting on September 1, 1941, the social isolation of the Jews within Germany, the marking of them as socially dead beings, was further intensified and symbolized by the government regulation compelling German Jews to wear in public a sizable yellow star of David inscribed in black with the word "*Jude*." The effects of this were obvious. Branding Jews publicly in this manner furthered their already great humiliation; wearing such a visible target among such a hostile populace also caused Jews to feel acute insecurity, and, because any German passerby could now identify them easily, Jews, especially Jewish children, suffered increased verbal and physical assaults. One Jewish woman from Stuttgart recalls: "Wearing the yellow star, with which we were branded from 1941 onwards as if we were criminals, was a form of torture. Every day when I went out in the street I had to struggle to maintain my composure."¹⁵ The introduction of the yellow star also meant that all Germans could now better recognize, monitor, and shun those bearing the

mark of the social dead. Not surprisingly, a standard feature of German occupation policy around Europe was to force Jews to wear the degrading yellow stars and badges.¹⁶

This social separation, with all of its contributing components, and the verbal (and also the physical) violence were complementary and mutually reinforcing in their effects. While the verbal violence proclaimed to Germans and Jews alike the moral caesura separating them, the laws and regulations declared and enforced a physical and social gulf. Together, they turned the Jews into socially dead beings, into *de facto* inhabitants of a leprous community, a community against which anything might and could be done. Together, they also made Jewish practical and existential life in Germany so inhospitable, difficult, and degrading that German Jews fled the country in droves. Of the 525,000 Jews living in Germany in January 1933, almost 130,000 emigrated during the next five years. By 1938, even the most self-delusionary of Jews had to admit to themselves that Jews could not live in Germany; the pace of emigration picked up during 1938–1939, when an additional 118,000 emigrated, choosing to go by this time to any country that would admit them. Slightly over 30,000 Jews managed to flee Germany after the war began.¹⁷ The Germans thus succeeded in forcing over half of the Jews of Germany to leave—usually forfeiting virtually all of their property, belongings, and wealth—what had been to them a beloved homeland.

While Hitler's *ideal* throughout the 1930s remained the elimination of all Jewish power, his immediate *intentions*, reflected in the Germans' policies, were scaled down to the more modest goal of making Germany *judenrein*, free of Jews. It was the most effective, even if ultimately unsatisfying, policy that could have been pursued under the international conditions of the 1930s. The encircled, weak Germany of this period could not have undertaken more radical measures without risking a war that it could not yet hope to win. Germany, during the 1930s, was pulling itself out of an economic depression, rearming itself, and, through diplomacy and force of arms in the second part of the decade, winning territorial and foreign policy victories—the *de facto* abrogation of the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936, the annexation of Austria in March 1938, and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939. A systematic, all-out physical assault upon the Jews of Germany threatened to prevent Germany from rebuilding its strength, the most essential precondition for Hitler to realize his various apocalyptic aims, including the vanquishing of world Jewry. Even had Hitler and his compatriots decided to ignore these formidable constraints in pursuit of the annihilation of German Jewry, the victory would have been pyrrhic. It would not have provided a "final solution" to the "Jewish Problem," for it would have left world Jewry barely weakened. Paul Zapp,

who was to become the commander of *Sonderkommando 11a*, which slaughtered Jews in the southern Ukraine and Crimea, articulated this self-evident "truth": "One can first conceive of the absolute cleansing of the Jewish question when one succeeds in striking decisively at world Jewry. The political and diplomatic leadership of Adolf Hitler has built the foundation for the European solution of the Jewish question. From this vantage point the solution to the world Jewish question will be tackled."¹⁸ "International Jewry," believed to be manipulating both the Soviet Union and the western democracies, especially the United States, could have been expected to mobilize itself and the rest of the world to defeat and destroy Germany.¹⁹ Hitler expected that an ultimate reckoning with the Jews would eventually take place; yet the time and conditions for it should be of the Germans' choosing.

Killing the Jews of Germany in the 1930s, even if it had been possible, would, given the compass of Hitler's goals, have been premature and ultimately self-defeating. Hitler and the Nazis were firmly in the grip of a halucinatory ideology, but they were not madmen. They were extraordinarily adept at achieving their goals, at reconstructing German society and the international environment to conform with their ideals. Had Hitler and his compatriots wanted with all their hearts to slaughter every last Jew at the moment of their ascension to power, everything about the calculating manner in which they proceeded in the 1930s, and even during the war, regarding matters other than the Jews suggests that they would not have done so, choosing instead to bide their time, until the time was ripe.

So the German government coolly settled temporarily for the complementary eliminationist policies of legally and administratively isolating the Jews within Germany and of pressuring them to emigrate. The policies, coordinated from above, proceeded apace, restrained only by the domestic considerations of maintaining the appearance of legality and ensuring as non-injurious an extraction as possible of Jews from the economy, and by the constraints of world opinion and its effects upon Germany's standing and prospects.²⁰

Kristallnacht, the nationwide pogrom of November 9-10, 1938, was an event of enormous significance. The Germans' measures taken until then had not succeeded in completely removing the Jews from their country, so it was time to become more severe, to send an unmistakable message and warning: Leave, or else. In this sense, *Kristallnacht*—the nationwide assault on the Jews' persons, on their livelihoods, and on the central symbols and structures of their community—was an unsurprising next step for the Nazi regime.²¹ It was also an ominous portent of the future. With *Kristallnacht*, the Germans made clearer than ever two things that everyone could discern: the Jews had no place in Germany, and the Nazis wanted to spill Jewish blood. To destroy

a community's institutions is psychologically almost the same and almost as satisfying as destroying its people. As a general "cleansing" of Germany of Jewish synagogues, *Kristallnacht* was a proto-genocidal assault.

After *Kristallnacht*, the Germans' eliminationist enterprise steadily evolved more comprehensive and deadly immediate intentions and corresponding policy measures. Yet at many steps along the way, Hitler and his compatriots were not entirely sure how best to implement their eliminationist intentions, and to develop appropriate policies and plans. The changing strategic situation on the traditional battlefield and on the one with the Jews, and the uncertainty and difficulties of having to implement what was becoming a continent-wide eliminationist program, the likes of which had never been seriously conceived or attempted, made planning difficult. How, then, can the course of the Germans' anti-Jewish policy after *Kristallnacht* best be understood?

The policies that the Germans subsequently implemented were articulated by *Das Schwarze Korps* two weeks after this nationwide orgy of violence, after this psychic equivalent of genocide.²² In an editorial, this official newspaper of the SS, the institution which more than any other organized and implemented the eliminationist and exterminationist measures, declared ominously: "The Jews must be driven from our residential districts and segregated where they will be among themselves, having as little contact with Germans as possible. . . . Confined to themselves, these parasites will be . . . reduced to poverty. . . . Yet, according to this organ of the SS, this would not be enough. There was to be a next stage. The editorial continued:

Let no one fancy, however, that we shall then stand idly by, merely watching the process. The German people are not in the least inclined to tolerate in their country hundreds of thousands of criminals, who not only secure their existence through crime, but also want to exact revenge. . . . These hundreds of thousands of impoverished Jews [would create] a breeding ground for Bolshevism and a collection of the politically criminal subhuman elements. . . . In such a situation we would be faced with the hard necessity of exterminating the Jewish underworld in the same way as, under our government of law and order, we are accustomed to exterminating any other criminals—that is, by fire and sword. The result would be the actual and final end of Jewry in Germany, its absolute annihilation.²³

It is not known whether or not this was the Germans' actual long-range policy at this moment, even though the first part of *Das Schwarze Korps'* editorial was clearly expressing the sense of a high-level meeting of November 12, 1938, where the assembled considered how they ought to dispose of Germany's Jews. Göring, who, on Hitler's orders, had convened this meeting, in

which Reinhard Heydrich played a prominent role, himself indicated that war would be calamitous for the Jews: "If the German Reich should in any foreseeable future get involved in a foreign conflict, it goes without question that we in Germany also will in the first place think of carrying out a great reckoning with the Jews."⁴⁴ *Das Schwarze Korps* was enunciating a framework that extrapolated from known intentions and from current measures to a plausible, desirable future; it was delineating a conceivable, measured, step-wise escalation of the unquestioned eliminationist program, each step being but a different measure in consonance with the reigning eliminationist anti-semitism.⁴⁵ That it bespoke the Nazis' fundamental intentions was attested to by the British consul in Germany. A few days prior to *Das Schwarze Korps'* editorial, a senior member of Hitler's Chancellery, in discussion with the British consul, "had 'made it clear that Germany intended to get rid of her Jews, either by emigration or if necessary by starving or killing them, since she would not risk having such a hostile minority in the country in the event of war.' The official had added that Germany 'intended to expel or kill off the Jews in Poland, Hungary and the Ukraine when she took control of those countries.'"⁴⁶ A few days after *Kristallnacht*, on November 21, Hitler told the South African Economics and Defense Minister that in the event of war, the Jews would be killed.⁴⁷ Less than three months later, on the anniversary of his assumption of power, Hitler echoed these more elaborated genocidal warnings with a pithy prophecy. On January 30, 1939, in a speech before the Reichstag which was subsequently published in the Party's principal newspaper, *Volksischer Beobachter*, and in a special pamphlet, he first explained how the Jews had laughed at his previous "prophecies" only to watch them come true. Then he declared: "Today I will once more be a prophet: if the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevizing of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!"⁴⁸

It must be emphasized that, like the editorial in *Das Schwarze Korps*, this was not the announcement of a program which was immediately to be made operational and implemented. It was a clear declaration of Hitler's ideal and, given the opportunity, his intent, a declaration that he was willing to make not only to his inner circle but also in a speech to the German nation and in serious discussion with foreign leaders. The relationship between a general war and the extermination of the Jews was sealed in Hitler's mind.⁴⁹ Yet, with the outbreak of the war, other developments had to occur for his firm intention to become feasible. Still, it was obvious that military conflict would lead Hitler to adopt policies towards the Jews that were still more dire than those of the 1930s. That Hitler and other Nazis were at the very least bandying

about the idea of a genocidal "final solution" at that time is as clear as their unmistakable words. That wholesale killing of those deemed unfit for human cohabitation was or would shortly already be part of their policy repertoire became evident with the initiation of the so-called Euthanasia program in October 1939.⁵⁰

It is highly implausible to maintain that Hitler and those who implemented the so-called Euthanasia program set out to kill, by the tens of thousands, non-Jewish Germans with mental illness but did not consider, let alone believe with religious-like certitude, that the Jews—conceived of as being far more malignant and dangerous—ought to share this fate. Those whom the Nazis marked for slaughter in the "Euthanasia" program (aside from the small percentage of Jews among the victims), if conceived of as being "life unworthy of living," were nevertheless thought to be far less of a threat to Germany than were the Jews. The congenitally infirm and insane imperiled the health of the nation in two ways: by their potential for passing on their maladies to new generations through propagation and, second, by consuming food and other resources.⁵¹ But this was child's play compared to the putative threat of the Jews, who—unlike the "Euthanasia" program's victims—were considered to be willfully malignant, powerful, bent upon and perhaps capable of destroying the German people *in toto*. Until the Jews were stamped out, Germany would be afflicted by their plague. As Hitler put it, "countless illnesses are caused by one bacillus: the Jews!" It followed that "we will become healthy when we eliminate the Jews."⁵² To believe that Hitler and other Nazi leaders would have undertaken the "Euthanasia" program and not want to have done the same to the Jews is to believe that the same person who would kill a bedbug would prefer not to kill the black widow, but to let it continue to live somewhere in his house—or within striking distance next door.⁵³

Hitler's and other Germans' bold warnings and prophecies notwithstanding, September 1939 was not yet a propitious time to undertake a program of exterminating the Jews. So they searched, indeed groped for the best possible interim "solutions" under constantly changing geostrategic conditions. Until they began to execute a program of systematic extermination in the summer of 1941, this search was an uncertain one, conducted simultaneously by uncoordinated and often competing institutions.⁵⁴ It consisted in the main of various considerations and measures to isolate, ghettoize, "resettle," and let the Jews diminish in number through starvation and its associated maladies—essentially the first of the two phases that had authoritatively been mapped out by *Das Schwarze Korps* after Göring's meeting.

While legal isolation within Germany and emigration abroad were both the maximal feasible and the actual eliminationist strategies in the 1930s, the conquest of Poland presented still greater eliminationist opportunities, of

which Hitler and his followers were happy to take advantage. In two senses, more "final" solutions could now be hatched: Germans controlled or expected soon to conquer various territories that could be used as a dumping ground for a vast number of Jews, and they now had within their physical grasp not just hundreds of thousands of Jews but millions.

No doubt, not everyone in the German leadership saw their suzerainty over so many Jews purely in terms of "opportunity," for the disposal of so many Jews posed enormous practical problems and created day-to-day difficulties for those charged with Jewish affairs.³⁵ Nevertheless, the prospect of ridding Europe of the millions of Jews under German control was not an unwanted burden but a redemptive chance to be seized. The opportunities inflamed the imaginations of those fashioning proposed "solutions" to consider more extreme and permanent policy measures, measures that were actually in greater harmony with their antisemitic eliminationist ideals. Omnipotent musings and policy proposals to move vast populations around the European landmass, to transform peoples into Helotic masses, and to decimate threatening or unwanted peoples came naturally and easily to the Nazified mind.³⁶ The Jews, the central demonic figures in the Nazi eschatology, inevitably fared badly when Germans gave free rein to their eliminationist sensibilities, to their dreams of reconstructing the social landscape and "human substance" of Europe, and to their "problem"-solving inventiveness.

Yet how could the Germans eliminate the nearly two million Jews in the German-occupied part of Poland as well as the more than one million additional Jews living under German domination?³⁷ Only two possibilities existed: to deport all of them to some designated region, or to kill them. In 1939 and 1940, genocide was not a feasible undertaking. The killing of German and Polish Jews would not have "solved" the problem, as the Nazis conceived of it. Yet even if Hitler had wanted to opt for such a risky partial "solution," other compelling reasons cautioned against it. Hitler had an uneasy live-and-let-live non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. Soviet troops were stationed in the heart of Poland and would have immediately become aware of a genocidal assault upon Polish Jewry. Given Hitler's belief that the Jews were all-powerful in the Soviet Union, that Bolshevism was more aptly called "Jewish-Bolshevism"—because Bolshevism was, in Hitler's words, "a monstrous product of the Jews"³⁸ and but a tool in their hands—a genocidal onslaught against Polish Jewry would, given Hitler's worldview, likely have sparked a war with the Soviet Union before Hitler was prepared for it. Moreover, to the extent that Hitler was still considering a separate peace with England, he could expect such plans to have been scuttled were Germany to undertake the mass extermination of Jewish civilians.³⁹ As long as Germany had to reckon with the responses of other powerful countries, genocide was not a practical policy.

Immediately upon Poland's capitulation, Heydrich issued on September 21, 1939, an ominous order authorizing the ghettoization of Polish Jewry. Heydrich began the order by distinguishing between long-term goals and interim measures:

A distinction must be made between.

1. the final goal (which will require a lengthy period) and
2. the stages towards the achievement of this final goal (which can be carried out on a short-term basis).

The measures envisaged require the most thorough preparation both in the technical and in the economic sense.

Heydrich then declared:

1. The first preliminary measure for achieving the final goal is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside in the larger cities. It must be speedily implemented.⁴⁰

It was not so speedily implemented; yet ghettoization did take place broadly throughout Poland in 1940 and the spring of 1941.⁴¹ Whatever the unstated "final goal" was, this order, together with the barrage of legal restrictions that the German occupation authorities placed on the Jews, signaled the resolute German intention that the Jews soon would no longer be permitted to dwell within the society of German-occupied Poland.⁴² Whatever the "final goal" would be—which could have meant only mass deportation or extermination—concentrating the Jews was to have been a preliminary step that would facilitate the implementation of any of the conceivable future German eliminationist policies. The top civil administrator of the Łódź District, Friedrich Uebelhör, in discussing in December 1939 the planned ghetto in Łódź, articulated the general understanding that existed regarding the relationship between short- and long-term goals, and the genocidal nature of Heydrich's order: "The creation of the ghetto is, of course, only a transition measure. I shall determine at what time and with what means the ghetto—and thereby also the city of Łódź—will be cleansed of Jews. The final goal, at any rate, must be that we burn out this bubonic plague utterly."⁴³

Given that in 1939 and 1940 genocide was not yet practical (and might not have been for the foreseeable future because of the geostrategic situation), Hitler and his subordinates turned to the next best "solution": plans of mass deportation. A few plans for transferring the Jews out of these regions, especially out of the Warthegau, the Polish territory now incorporated into the

Reich, were proposed, entertained for a while, and even begun to be implemented before the Germans abandoned them. The two most comprehensive proposals that received some serious consideration were, first, to create a "reservation," a dumping ground, for the Jews in the Lublin region of eastern Poland and, second, to ship them all to Madagascar. None of the proposals for mass deportation, including these two, was anything but, in Leni Yahil's phrase, a "phantom of a solution," namely an interim step on the road to genocide or, put differently, a form of bloodless genocide. Those fashioning these schemes did not conceive of these prospective dumping grounds as habitable environments where Jews could make new lives for themselves. Their temper of mind was revealed by the then District Governor of Lublin in November 1939, who suggested that the "district with its very marshy character could . . . serve as a Jew-reservation [*Judenreservat*], a measure which could possibly lead to a widespread decimation [*starke Dezimierung*] of the Jews."⁴⁴ The proposed reservations were to be, at best, enormous prisons—like the walled-in ghettos that the Germans were to construct for Polish Jewry—consisting of economically unsustainable territory, in which the Jews, cut off from the rest of the world, would slowly die off. Those hatching the plans, by and large, were well aware that the proposed destinations were woefully insufficient in resources for the Jews that they expected to cram into them. There is, furthermore, especially in the case of Lublin, no evidence that such deportations would have been anything but a way station for the Jews, until the Germans were ready for their final disposal.

September 1939 through the beginning of 1941 was not an interlude in the prosecution of the eliminationist enterprise,⁴⁵ but a period of eliminationist experimentation that produced a series of measures ultimately unsatisfactory to the Germans; they were not feasible as "final" solutions. The central eliminationist policies of this period included the initial systematic killing of some Jews in the fall of 1939, the establishment of ghettos, especially the two largest ones in Warsaw in November 1940 and in Łódź earlier that year in April, the decimation of Jewish health and life through calculated starvation,⁴⁶ and the groping around for a more comprehensive relocation of the Jews into some distant area that would be an enormous ghetto that could eventually be transformed into an enormous cemetery.

Already in the 1939–1941 period, the Germans had no long-term intention of keeping the Jews within their dominion alive—either where the Jews then lived or in some distant land—and in many ways they were already eagerly treating the socially dead Jews more apocalyptically, as if a collective death sentence had been passed. This period sealed the fate of the Jews in the sense that Hitler's subordinates began to fashion concrete plans for a "final solution," a "solution" that admitted no place for Jews not just within the

German Reich but within an expanded and ever-expanding German dominion. Before this, the elimination of the Jews from the European landmass had been an ideal to be discussed in programmatic, though wishful, terms; now, with the new opportunities, the Germans immediately began more concrete planning: during this period, the *best* intended fate for the Jews was that they would be placed in hermetically sealed, economically unviable leper colonies that would not receive adequate food supplies—which was psychologically and ideologically the functional, if not the eventual actual, equivalent of genocide.

With the planning of the war against the Soviet Union in the first half of 1941, Hitler's thinking about the immediate disposition of the Jews changed. Unlike in the previous twelve to fifteen months, when all kinds of proposals for "solving" the "Jewish Problem" were floated, during early 1941 this inventive eliminationist search came to a halt. All these earlier ruminations regarding less final "solutions" were now rendered moot by Hitler's turn to the most "final solution" imaginable.⁴⁷ By this time, Hitler had given up on invading or striking a separate peace with Britain, and was turning eastward for a final accounting with the Soviet Union and Jewry. After all this time, the opportunity existed for Hitler to fulfill his prophecy, to make good on his promise that a war would result in the annihilation of the Jews of Europe. Sometime either at the end of 1940 or in early 1941, Hitler resolved finally to turn his ideal into reality, and made the *decision* to kill all of European Jewry.⁴⁸ The evidence indicates that by the end of January 1941, Heydrich, having been charged by Hitler to develop a suitable plan, submitted his proposal for the Europe-wide "Final Solution project" (*Endlösungprojekt*).⁴⁹

It is no coincidence that during this time Hitler referred publicly to his January 30, 1939 prophecy. Yet for the first time, his reference took the form not of a prediction of some development in some indefinite future, but of a firm intention that would be carried out shortly. On January 30, 1941, the eighth anniversary of his assumption of power and precisely two years after enunciating his apocalyptic "prophecy," he reminded the nation that he had "pointed out that should the other [*sic*] world be plunged into war by Jewry, the whole of Jewry will have played out its role in Europe. They [the Jews] may also laugh about it even today, just as they laughed earlier about my prophecies. *The coming months and years* will prove that I have been right [my emphasis]."⁵⁰ Just less than three months earlier, on November 8, 1940, Hitler had referred to his "prophecy" as something that was still off on the horizon.⁵¹ Yet now, on January 30, 1941, he could say that he would begin to play it out in "the coming months." He also, at this time, stated for the first time something that he had not said before, and that he was to repeat during later references to his prophecy while the Germans were in the process of ex-

terminating European Jewry. Now that he had decided to implement his genocidal wish, he could taunt the Jews, just as he would later do while his followers were killing them *en masse*. He was now confident of the outcome: Let the Jews laugh, he declared publicly, just as they had laughed at his earlier prophecies. Hitler had taken the decision. He was sure that he would be laughing last.⁵²

With Hitler having finally decided upon the only policy that was fully satisfactory to his eliminationist ideal, new eliminationist institutions soon became prominent. While verbal assaults, legal restrictions, and ghettos—the central institutions of the anti-Jewish policy through 1941—all remained part of the Germans' policy repertoire, they were now superseded in importance by the execution squad, concentration and "work" camps, and the gas chamber.

During the spring of 1941, the Germans planned and prepared for a dual assault on the Soviet Union. Greatly different in the scope, complexity, and the number of men and resources to be used, the vastly larger military campaign and the smaller exterminatory one were intertwined, parallel operations in Hitler's planning. The institutions charged with the execution of the two—the armed forces having been primarily responsible for the former, and the SS having been chiefly responsible for the latter—signed, prior to the invasion, a jurisdictional and operational agreement, and then cooperated closely in the field.⁵³ Units of each were assigned to the four geographical areas into which the Germans divided the conquered Soviet territory from north to south. The armed forces, the *Einsatzgruppen* (see below), and the other security forces all understood that this war was not to be a war like other wars; it was not to be a war of mere military conquest, but one in which the opponents—for the armed forces, the Soviet army and state; for the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Jewish people—were to be vanquished utterly, destroyed, obliterated from the face of the earth.

In order to conduct the genocidal campaign against the Jews, Himmler, as the chief of staff of the genocidal cohort, set up four mobile *Einsatzgruppen* that would spearhead the wholesale slaughter. Each was subdivided into a number of smaller units, called *Einsatzkommandos* and *Sonderkommandos*. The organized mass killing of Jews, initially conducted mainly by them, although other police and security units also participated, began in the first few days of Operation Barbarossa, the Germans' code name for the assault on the Soviet Union. Although the evidence regarding the *Einsatzgruppen*'s initial orders and how these orders subsequently changed is ambiguous, the best interpretation of the evidence indicates the following developments.

In the days before the attack, Heydrich and his direct subordinates addressed the officers of the *Einsatzgruppen* on two different occasions, first in

Berlin and then at the *Einsatzgruppen*'s staging ground for the upcoming campaign in Pretzsch.⁵⁴ The *Einsatzgruppen* officers were told of their duties, which consisted broadly of securing the conquered rear areas behind the ever-advancing army. This job required that they identify and kill leading representatives of the Communist regime, anyone who might foment and organize resistance against the German occupation.⁵⁵ They also learned of Hitler's decision to exterminate Soviet Jewry.⁵⁶ Walter Blume, the commander of *Sonderkommando 7a*, describes the momentous scene: "Heydrich himself explained that the Russian campaign was imminent, that partisan war was to be expected, and that in this region many Jews lived who had to be exterminated through liquidation. When one of those assembled called out: 'How are we supposed to do this?' he said, 'You will find out.' He explained further that Eastern Jewry, as the breeding ground [*Keimzelle*] of World Jewry, was to be annihilated. There was no mistaking it that all Jews were supposed to be exterminated, without regard to age or sex."⁵⁷ This decision was a *strategic* one with an open-ended, still-to-be-hammered-out battle plan, the tactical details of which would be transmitted to the *Einsatzkommandos* in accord with the demands of the unfolding events.⁵⁸ As the reservations of Otto Ohlendorf, the commander of *Einsatzgruppe D*, about the planned mass shootings indicate, he and other *Einsatzgruppen* officers were leery that their men would not have the stomachs to carry out such gruesome orders, and that the deed would also brutalize them, rendering them unfit for human society.⁵⁹

For this reason, it made sense for *Einsatzkommando* leaders to have discretion in the initial phase of implementing the genocidal order. They could, as one tack, try to enlist local Lithuanians, Latvians, or Ukrainians to do the dirty work. This spared the Germans from carrying out such gruesome tasks, and it served to strengthen the resolve of the Germans to kill so many unarmed people by letting them witness the "just" revenge of the local peoples, who ostensibly had suffered at the hands of these Jews. Using local henchmen was encouraged by Heydrich in written orders to the *Einsatzgruppen*,⁶⁰ for, as the perpetrators themselves understood it, "the purpose of this measure was to preserve the psychological equilibrium of our own people. . . ."⁶¹ The *Einsatzgruppen* officers also could habituate their men into their new vocation as genocidal executioners through a stepwise escalation of the killing. First, by shooting primarily teenage and adult Jewish males, they would be able to acclimate themselves to mass executions without the shock of killing women, young children, and the infirm. According to Alfred Filbert, the commander of *Einsatzkommando 9*, the order from Heydrich "quite clearly" "included also women and children." Yet, "in the first instance, without a doubt, the executions were limited generally to Jewish

males.⁶² By generally keeping units' initial massacres to smallish numbers (by German standards) of a few hundred or even a thousand or so, instead of many thousands, the perpetrators would be less likely to become overwhelmed by the enormity of the gargantuan bloodbaths that were to follow. They also could believe that they were selectively killing the most dangerous Jews, which was a measure that they could conceive to be reasonable for this apocalyptic war. Once the men became used to slaughtering Jews on this selective and smaller scale, the officers could more easily expand the scope and size of the killing operations.⁶³

Another, probably more important determinant of the stepwise implementation of the genocidal order was two related considerations. The Germans were expecting to vanquish the Soviet Union in short order, so there was no immediate rush to destroy the Jews. For this reason, Himmler was content to leave the scaled-down, early implementation of the policy to a force sufficient in size to this task, though undermanned for the larger genocidal undertaking. The *Einsatzgruppen* were initially composed of about three thousand men. As Himmler, Heydrich, and the *Einsatzgruppen* leaders themselves well knew, these mobile killing squads were too small to succeed in an immediate all-out slaughter of Soviet Jewry.⁶⁴ Thus, at the beginning of July, on the occasion of the first killing operation of *Einsatzkommando 8* in Bialystok, its commander, Otto Bradfisch, told one of his subordinates that although the *Kommando* had to "pacify" the conquered areas, it "did not have to do it so thoroughly, because larger units would follow that would take care of the rest."⁶⁵ Second, the program of utter annihilation was a novel enterprise which required that the Germans feel their way, that they learn through experimentation how to organize the killing operations logistically and what the most effective techniques were. After all, no models existed for the unprecedented undertaking. It is no wonder, therefore, that they began with a smaller than ultimately desirable and necessary force, which would blaze the way for the soon-to-be-expanded genocidal cohorts in the form of additional SS and police units. In the first few weeks, the *Einsatzkommandos* were the equivalent of genocidal scouting parties, developing the methods of killing, habituating the perpetrators to their new vocation and, generally speaking, working out the feasibility of the overall enterprise.⁶⁶

The first *Einsatzkommando* killing operation occurred on the third day of Barbarossa, when a *Kommando* of *Einsatzgruppe A* shot 201 people in the Lithuanian border town of Garsden, most of whom were Jews. In the next days and weeks, the *Einsatzkommandos* orchestrated a host of mass slaughters of Jews. Some they perpetrated themselves; some they perpetrated in conjunction with locally organized auxiliaries; and for some they allowed such locals, espe-

cially in Lithuania and the Ukraine (with German guidance) to slaughter Jews by the hundreds and thousands in pogrom-like rampages and massacres.⁶⁷



Under the eyes of German soldiers, Lithuanians beat Jews to death in Kovno at the end of June 1941.

The Germans, together with their Lithuanian henchmen, slaughtered thousands of Jews in Kovno (Kaunas) in the last days of June and first days of July; in Lvov, the Germans, together with Ukrainians, killed a few thousand

Jews.⁶⁸ The first large mass shooting that the *Einsatzkommandos* carried out by themselves was probably in the Ukrainian city of Lutsk on July 2, where the men of *Sonderkommando 4a* shot over 1,100 Jews, although this was preceded by an orgy of killing perpetrated by the German Police Battalion 309 in Bialystok on June 27.⁶⁹ A great deal of variation characterized the technique of these early killing forays because the Germans were experimenting, seeking to devise an ever better exterminationist formula. Himmler, like a good commanding general, traveled around the killing fields in order to inspect the troops. He consulted with his officers and even once observed a killing operation in Minsk.⁷⁰ The reports that Himmler received from the *Einsatzgruppen* and his own inspection trips to the area provided him with evidence that the initial genocidal forays had been successful insofar as they demonstrated that the men could bring themselves to kill Jews *en masse* and that the techniques for such killing were sufficient. He thus ordered an expansion of the embryonic genocidal killing to unrestrained genocidal slaughter.⁷¹

A remarkable aspect of this transition to wholesale slaughter was how "normal" it was to the men of the *Einsatzkommandos* and the other units that were contributing to the genocide. In their postwar testimony, the killers hardly remark upon the expansion of the scope of the killing to include women, children, and the aged, or the increased size and speed of the slaughter. The perpetrators in these units certainly did not see either of these changes—the increased scope and tempo of their killing operations—as being a fundamental alteration in their task, as constituting a qualitatively different assignment. These Germans do not say: "At first we were killing only 'Jewish Bolsheviks,' 'saboteurs,' or 'partisans,' and then all of a sudden we were told to annihilate entire communities, including women and children." Although some speak of their unease upon receiving their initial orders to kill and realizing what they were being asked to do, or of the shock of their initial killings, as a rule the Germans report this escalation and expansion of the slaughter—if at all—in neutral tones, which is not surprising, for, though it was a new, somewhat different task, it did not fundamentally alter the Germans' understanding of what they were doing. For this reason, the change is typically not even mentioned by the perpetrators at all.⁷² Himmler, ever the pragmatist, had initially detailed the *Einsatzkommandos*, as a prelude to the full battle, to engage in probing forays in order to test their mettle and hone their tactics against the enemy; when this baptismal phase was over, he sent them on the all-out, full-frontal assault, an assault whose essential outline and purpose they had known would be soon in coming. The transformation was as little noticed and as little worthy of comment as the reception by army soldiers of orders to launch a new offensive action in a war that they had already been fighting.

One man who does mention the expansion of the killing was the chief of personnel of *Einsatzkommando 9*. He maintains that at first the *Kommando's* killing of Jews was restricted to males, and was expanded to include women and children in the second half of July. He is sure that Filbert, the commander, had informed them of their execution orders *before* the attack on the Soviet Union. Yet, he is unsure whether Filbert "had spoken of 'all Jews' or only of the 'male Jews.'"⁷³ The subsequent inclusion of women and children among the slaughtered was obviously but an *operational* development, not a fundamental alteration in the understanding of the men of *Einsatzkommando 9* of what they were doing. Had it been otherwise, then this man and others would surely have remembered whether the initial order had meant that they were contributing to the extermination of all of Soviet Jewry or just of the Jewish men. That this man and men in other *Einsatzkommandos* and police battalions which killed Jews in the Soviet Union testify that their commanders had informed them of the order to exterminate Soviet Jewry, *either before the attack on the Soviet Union or during its first few days*, is conclusive evidence that such a general order was given, and that Hitler had taken the genocidal decision before Barbarossa commenced.⁷⁴

Even if the interpretation put forward here of the *Einsatzgruppen's* exact initial order is wrong—even if those who doubt that an order for the total extermination of Soviet Jewry was at first issued are correct, and the initial order was to kill "only" teenage and adult Jewish males—the order was still genocidal and clearly was understood by the perpetrators as such. The men of Police Battalion 307, for instance, already in the first half of July, received the order to round up Jewish males in Brest-Litovsk between the ages of sixteen to sixty. They managed to assemble between six thousand and ten thousand Jews, whom they then shot because of their "race."⁷⁵ The killing of the adult males of a community is nothing less than the destruction of that community, especially when the women are forbidden to bear children (in the unlikely event that the Germans would not have also shortly slaughtered them). With the preparation for the military attack on the Soviet Union, Hitler and his subordinates had crossed the psychological and moral Rubicon to genocide—and the die was cast for all of European Jewry. All that was left was for the Germans to devise the operational plans, organize the resources, and implement the genocide on a full scale.⁷⁶

The second stage of operationalizing the genocidal plan required additional manpower, which Himmler assigned to the various Higher SS and Police Leaders (*HSSPF*) in the Soviet Union under whose jurisdiction the *Einsatzgruppen* operated. With Himmler's alteration of their operational orders, the *Einsatzkommandos*, together with SS, police, and even army units, began to perpetrate gargantuan massacres, which systematically decimated entire Jewish

communities. The photographs below show two scenes of the Germans' annihilation of the Jews from the ghetto Mizoč on October 14, 1942. In the first photograph, Jewish women and children huddle together naked as they await their execution. In the second photograph, two Germans wade among some of the dead in order to administer another bullet to anyone still alive after the initial salvos, such as the woman who is raising her head and upper body.

A sample of the Germans' slaughters included 23,600 Jews in Kamenets-Podolski on August 27-28, 1941; 19,000 in Minsk, divided during two different massacres in November 1941; 21,000 in Rovno on November 7-8, 1941; a total of over 25,000 Jews near Riga on November 30 and December 8-9, 1941; 10,000 to 20,000 in Kharkov in January 1942; and, in the largest single shooting massacre, more than 33,000 over two days at Babi Yar on the outskirts of Kiev at the end of September 1941.

While conceiving or preparing the attack on the Soviet Union, Hitler finally made the transition to the genocidal policy variant of the eliminationist ideology, which had long lurked in his mind. During the actual assault, it became clear to the involved Germans, officers and enlisted men alike, that the eliminationist ideology was finally to be implemented in its most uncompromising, logical form. Although it is not known for sure, it is most unlikely that Hitler decided to annihilate Soviet Jewry without at the same time deciding



Einsatzkommandos force Jewish women from the Mizoč Ghetto to undress before executing them.



Their corpses after the execution. Two of the German killers finish off the women who survived the initial shooting with individual shots to the head.



The execution ravine at Babi Yar

that the moment had come to exterminate all of European Jewry as well. Given his conception of the "Jewish Problem," it would have made no sense whatsoever to do the job only halfway. The time had come for making good on his prophecy and promise for the destruction of European Jewry; moving to an exterminationist "solution" for Soviet Jewry entailed the same "solution" for all Jews.⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, the actual *operational* planning for the Europe-wide expansion of the extermination program began at the very latest around the time, in mid to late July, that Himmler changed the *operational* orders of the *Einsatzgruppen* by increasing the tempo of the Germans' killing of Jews in the Soviet Union.⁷⁸ At this point, after a few weeks into the genocidal onslaught against Soviet Jewry, after the *Einsatzgruppen* had demonstrated the feasibility of systematic mass slaughters, and after the *planning* for the attack on Soviet Jews had been completed, Himmler, the Nazi leadership, and the SS could turn their attention to the implementation of the genocidal decision across the continent, to the bringing of Nazi reality closer to Nazi ideals. Until then their energies and attention had been taken up in the planning, organizing, and implementing of the genocide in the most important and first operational area. Once the mass slaughter began in the Soviet Union, attention could be diverted to the rest of Europe, and the extension of the killing elsewhere was but a matter of operational detail, logistics, and timing. The Germans had to concern themselves only with practical matters of organizing the genocide and with doing so in a manner that would be harmonious with their other strategic, economic, and transformative objectives (even if this would not always be easy). Drawing on the experience that they were accumulating in the Soviet Union, they realized that they needed to consider some changes in their mode of operating.

Himmler's assessment that the institutions and the men were up to the genocidal task was proving to be correct, for they were killing Jews and effacing Jewish communities in the Soviet Union at a furious pace. Yet the officers in the field and also the higher leadership were becoming dissatisfied with the method of slaughter; however dedicated to their goal the Germans manning the killing squads were, the seemingly ceaseless slaughtering of unarmed men, women, and children was taking a psychological toll on some of them. Ohlendorf's intuitive apprehension, upon learning of the genocidal decision, that perpetrating such slaughter would not be good for the Germans involved was partly being borne out.⁷⁹ Himmler, ever solicitous of the welfare of those who were turning his and Hitler's apocalyptic visions into deed, began to search about for a means of killing that would be less burdensome to the executioners. In the spirit of their initial, then

rejected attempts to kill Soviet Jews by engineering "pogroms," and of their stepwise escalation of the slaughter of Soviet Jews, the Nazi leaders, as they always had, continued to be willing to employ tactical flexibility in pursuit of their strategic objective. After some experimentation with other means of killing and the development of mobile gas vans, which the *Einsatzkommandos* and other Germans used to kill tens of thousands of Jews, the Germans constructed permanent gassing installations.⁸⁰ The move to gassing, whether in mobile or fixed installations—contrary to the widely accepted belief—was prompted not by considerations of efficiency, but by the search for a method that would ease the psychological burden of killing for the Germans.⁸¹ Permanent gassing installations were preferable to mobile ones because they had a greater killing capacity, they allowed the Germans to conduct the killings out of sight of the unwanted onlookers that had routinely watched the *Einsatzkommando* slaughters in the Soviet Union, and they could house installations for the disposal of the bodies—a task that had been a problem for the two itinerant institutions of killing: shooting commandos and gas vans.

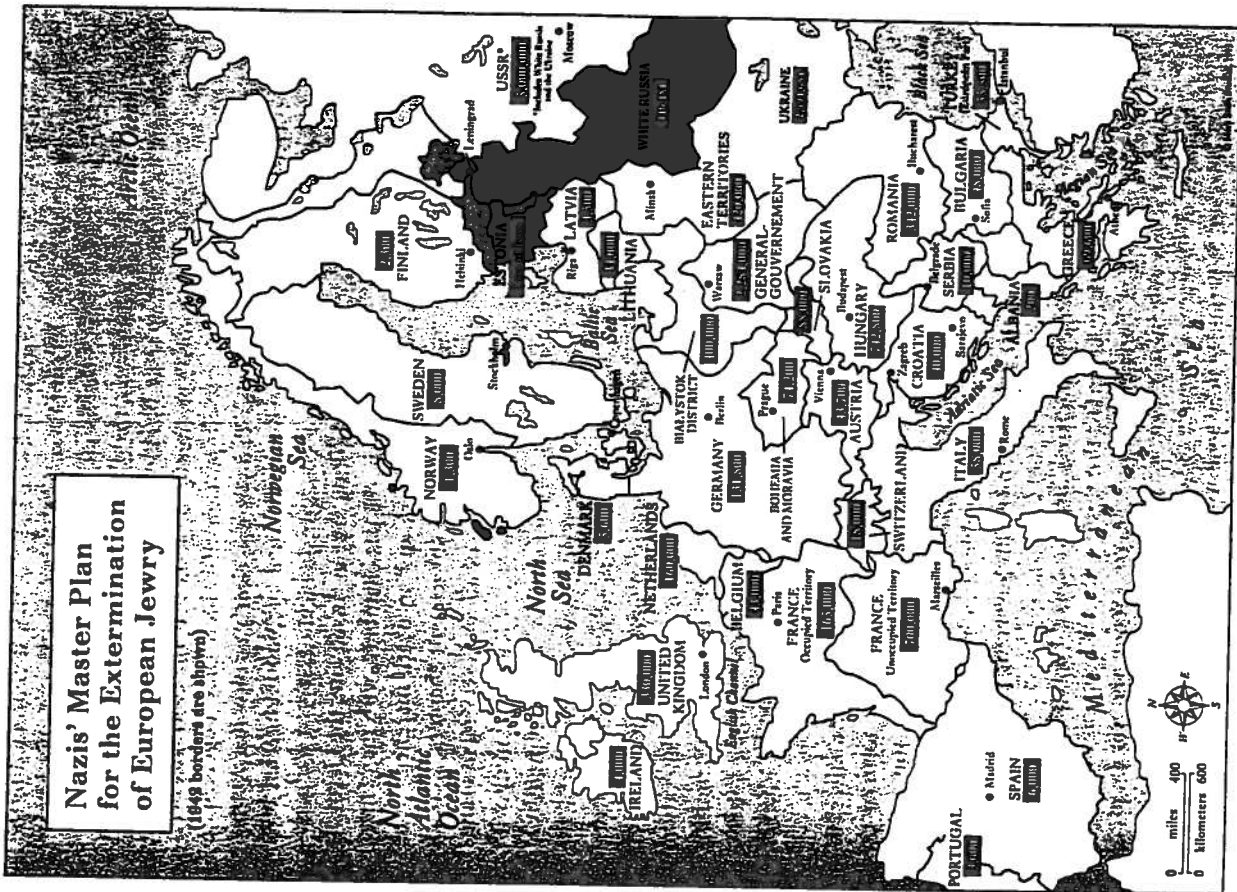
The preparations for the next operational phase of the genocidal program took place from the summer of 1941 into the first months of 1942.⁸² The most significant developments were the erection of death camps. The Germans experimented with Auschwitz's initial "small" gas chamber on September 3, 1941, using Zyklon B (hydrogen cyanide) to kill about 850 people, 600 of whom were Soviet prisoners of war. Systematic gassing of Jews began at Auschwitz-Birkenau in March 1942. The first fixed gassing institution to become operational on more than an experimental basis was Chelmno, in which, using gas vans, the Germans began killing Jews from Łódź on December 8, 1941. Gassing began at the *Aktion Reinhard* death camps in 1942, in Belzec on March 17, in Sobibór in early May, and in Treblinka on July 23. The Germans located the death camps in Poland primarily because Poland was the demographic center of European Jewry, which made it logistically the most practical site for these mass extermination facilities.⁸³ They also situated each of the death camps strategically, intending that each would consume the Jews of designated regions. The Germans killed the Jews of the Warthegau at Chelmno, the two million Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* at the three *Aktion Reinhard* camps of Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, and the Jews of western, southern, and southeastern Europe at Auschwitz.

With the plans and the installations already well in development, and after many preparatory meetings and measures, Heydrich finally assembled representatives of the relevant administrations together in Berlin at the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, where he informed them of their duties in the ongoing extermination of European Jewry, which would total

eleven million. For the same reason that Hitler had not been content to restrict the genocidal killing to the Soviet Union, the apocalyptic intentions revealed by Heydrich to the others were not confined to Jews currently within the Nazi dominion. On the itemized list of the intended German victims were the Jews of Turkey, Switzerland, England, and Ireland. No half measures were acceptable once this apocalyptic enterprise became realizable.⁸⁴

Within a year after the initiation of the *Aktion Reinhard* slaughter of Polish Jewry living in the *Generalgouvernement*, the Germans had killed 75 to 80 percent of their eventual Jewish victims. *Aktion Reinhard* itself consumed the lives of approximately two million Polish Jews, through *Einsatzgruppen*-style mass shootings and mainly in the gas chambers of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, the last having been the destination of the Warsaw ghetto's inhabitants. By this time, Auschwitz had claimed hundreds of thousands of victims from around German-occupied Europe. All told, the Germans had slaughtered, mainly by shooting and gassing (in gas vans), over two million Jews in territories that they had seized from the Soviet Union. During this period, the exterminationist option of the eliminationist anti-Jewish program was given priority over other German goals. The Germans, both the leadership and those implementing the plans, pursued the Jews' destruction with a single-mindedness that, as a rule, shunted other objectives aside. Now that the primary achievement of a Germania free of the putative timeless Jewish threat was in sight, the tactical compromises that had previously been made to other important goals were no longer deemed necessary and occurred ever less frequently. Annihilating European Jewry became, with the war and at times even of higher priority than the war, the central mission of the German juggernaut.

Coincidental to the rising exterminationist tempo was the great expansion of the camp system and the number of Jews and non-Jews condemned to its horrors. The Germans began to employ slave labor, mainly non-Jews, in greater numbers as the war economy's labor shortage became ever more acute. In contrast, the employment of Jews in economic production, never an important part of the Germans' disposition of Jews, counted ever less weightily in their deliberations, although the growing acuity of the labor shortage made it ever more economically essential that they be used for production. This is significant because it demonstrates unequivocally that the priority given to the extermination of the Jews, both by Hitler and the Nazi leadership, as well as to those commanding and staffing the concentration camp and "work" camp system, was so great that the Germans willfully destroyed irreplaceable and desperately needed Jewish labor and production, and thereby imperiled their prospects of military victory. The destruction of the Jews, once it had become achievable, took priority even over safeguarding Nazism's very existence.⁸⁵



Whatever they sound like to us, it would be a mistake to dismiss these as the words of a desperate madman facing death. In fact, they reveal Hitler's long-standing ideals, his hopeful intentions, and the foundation of every feature of his eliminationist program, whatever its momentary policy measures were. They were words that expressed the beliefs that had infused a country and its people with energy and guidance during a twelve-year pursuit of the expurgation of the Jewish people from any influence over Germany. They were the most significant words that Hitler believed that he could bequeath to the German people so that, as the words had in the past, they might command, guide, and inspire Germans for future action.

CONCLUSION

The moment that the opportunity existed for the only "final solution" that was "final," Hitler seized the opportunity to begin to bring about his ideal of a world forever freed of Jewry and made the leap to genocide. This occurred when the prospect appeared of conquering what the Germans considered to be, together with Poland, the wellspring of Jewry, the Soviet Union. When the correlations are made of the Germans' anti-Jewish measures with their deduced or imputed intentions, Hitler's hypothesized psychological states and moods, and the Germans' military fortunes, the correlation that stands out, that jumps out, as having been more significant than any other (than *all* of the others) is that Hitler opted for genocide at the first moment that the policy became practical. That the Nazis implemented and considered other policies up to this point in no sense indicates that they deemed any of these policies to be preferable or superior. They decided upon these policies under conditions that did not lend themselves to a final genocidal accounting with world Jewry. Before 1941, Hitler and the Nazi leadership did, however, consistently seek out and implement extreme, utterly radical eliminationist measures, consistently taking advantage of new opportunities to fashion more comprehensive and more "final" plans. Explaining the course of the Hitlerian anti-Jewish policy can best be done not by focusing on the structure of the system or by giving enormous weight to Hitler's and other Nazis' alleged moods allegedly deriving from the successes or failures of their attempts to conquer and reshape Europe, but by taking Hitler's stated ideals and ultimate intentions seriously.⁸⁵ The unfolding of the Germans' eliminationist enterprise—in which every major German measure against the Jews conformed to its assumptions and goals—can be explained in the most obvious of ways, as the product of Hitler's and the socially shared, deeply held antisemitic eliminationist convictions and ideals, operationalized in light of

The priority of the extermination was so great that it continued to the dying gasps of the regime. Its appropriateness and necessity as *the* "solution" to the "Jewish Problem" was so accepted, internalized, by Germans at all levels who perpetrated the slaughters, that they by and large naturally continued to pursue its goals even as their Nazified world was disintegrating around them. The last major national community of Jews that the Germans decimated was the Hungarian, a good portion of which they deported to Auschwitz in the summer of 1944. The war was clearly already lost, yet between May 15 and July 9 the Germans crammed 437,000 Hungarian Jews into 147 transports of scarce rolling stock, diverted from essential war activities. In the single most concentrated killing orgy at Auschwitz, the Germans immediately killed most of these Jews in the gas chambers, with many more subsequently dying in other German camps and on death marches.⁸⁶ The death marches, which are treated in depth in subsequent chapters, were an even greater testament to the will of Germans—of all ranks serving in a range of institutions—to bring about the destruction of the Jews. Beginning with the need to vacate areas imperiled by the Soviet advance in the last months of 1944, and then within Germany itself during the last weeks and days of the war, the Germans sent Jews and non-Jews on forced marches under brutal conditions while depriving them of nourishment. Thousands of Jews died on these marches, both from the Germans' shots and blows and from starvation, exhaustion, and the ravages that they produced on the body. Perhaps nothing illustrates better the fanatical devotion of Hitler and all those engaged in implementing the exterminationist "solution" to the "Jewish Problem" than do the death marches.⁸⁷

Just as Hitler began his suzerainty with verbal tirades and a symbolic eliminationist assault on the Jewish community of Germany in the form of the April 1, 1933, boycott, he ended his rule and his life while his faithful followers slaughtered Jews up to the last moment, proclaiming on April 29, 1945, his testament to the German people, which concluded with the concern that had always been central to Hitler's worldview and his governing project, namely

the true culprit behind this murderous struggle: Jewry! I have also not left anybody in the dark about the fact that this time it would not only be millions of children of Europeans from the Aryan nations who will die of hunger, not only millions of grown men who will suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children who will burn to death in the cities and be permitted to be bombarded to death, without holding the true culprit responsible for his crime, even though it be by more humane methods. Above all I pledge the leadership of the nation and its followers to the scrupulous observation of the racial laws and to an implacable opposition against the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.⁸⁸

changing opportunities and strategic considerations. The essence of the eliminationist program and its development can be encapsulated by a simple statement of the four causally interrelated aspects of Hitler's, and therefore of Germany's, anti-Jewish policy:

1. Hitler expressed his obsessive eliminationist racial antisemitism from his earliest days in public life. Indeed, his first published political writing was devoted to antisemitism,⁸⁶ as was his final testament to the German people. Eliminationist antisemitism was the linchpin of his worldview, as stated in *Mein Kampf* and repeatedly elsewhere. It was the single most consistent and passionately held aspect of Hitler's political thought and expression.
2. Upon assuming office, Hitler and his regime, in keeping with Hitler's prior pronouncements, turned the eliminationist antisemitism into unprecedented radical measures and pursued them with unceasing vigor.
3. Before the outbreak of the war, Hitler announced, and then during the war repeated many times, his prophecy, indeed his promise: the war would provide him with the opportunity to exterminate European Jewry.⁸⁷
4. When the moment was ripe, when the opportunity appeared, Hitler carried out his intention and succeeded in slaying approximately six million Jews.

The genocide was the outgrowth not of Hitler's moods, not of local initiative, not of the impersonal hand of structural obstacles, but of Hitler's ideal to eliminate all Jewish power, an ideal which was broadly shared in Germany. Rarely has a national leader so openly, frequently, and emphatically announced an apocalyptic intention—in this case, to destroy Jewish power and even the Jews themselves—and made good on his promise. It is remarkable and, indeed, almost inexplicable that interpreters today could construe Hitler's prophecy, his oft-stated intention to destroy the Jews, to have been meant but metaphorically or to have been but meaningless verbiage. Hitler himself clearly looked back on his January 30, 1939, "prophecy" as having been a firm statement of intention, and repeatedly said so, as if to make sure that he would not be misunderstood. Contrary to those who would dismiss Hitler's words, there is every reason to privilege Hitler's understanding of his own intentions, to take the congruence between stated annihilationist intentions and consummated deed at face value.⁸⁸

Hitler had, in fact, indicated prior to the outbreak of war that there were two groups whom he would destroy if war should come: the Jews and the congenitally infirm. Already in 1935, he informed the Chief Physician of the Reich that "the euthanasia problem would be taken up and solved" under the cloak of war.⁸⁹ This parallelism between a statement of intention and the subsequent action that was faithful to the pronouncement should be seen as convincing evidence for the existence—on both counts—of Hitler's annihilationist intent and of his patience to wait for the opportune moment for the implementation of his pre-existing will. What more evidence of premeditation can reasonably be expected?

The will to kill the Jews was not infused into Hitler and his followers by external conditions, but, embedded deep in their beliefs about Jews, it welled up from within them, driving them forward to action when the opportunity presented itself. Demonological racial antisemitism was the motive force of the eliminationist program, pushing it to its logical genocidal conclusion once German military prowess succeeded in creating appropriate conditions. When examining the contours of the course of the Germans' anti-Jewish policy, we should not lose sight of this fundamental truth. Nazi common sense—that the Jews must disappear forever were the millennium to come—was at the root of the genocidal impulse. It energized the sustained, twelve-year attempt to bring about this fevered vision of a Germany and the world freed of all Jewish influence. Not only was it the source of the exterminationist impulse, but Nazi common sense also made genocide the most preferable of all eliminationist options.



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From Shootings to Gas Vans

...the Einsatzgruppen looked for additional and simpler methods for mass killings. The new facility developed and supplied to the Einsatzgruppen was gas vans. The idea of the gas van originated with SS brigadefuhrer Artur Nebe, commander of Einsatzgruppe B, which operated in territories close to the central front and which had carried out in Belorussia large scale shooting actions of Jews, communists, and other "asocial elements." Nebe, as former leader of the Reich's Criminal Police Department (Kripo), was familiar with the euthansia program and killing by gas.

In September 1941, Einsatzgruppe B was faced with the task of liquidating the patients of the lunatic asylums in the cities of Minsk and Mogilev. Nebe decided to find a simpler way for his men to kill the mentally diseased, other than by shooting them. He contacted Kripo headquarters and asked for their help in carrying out the killing of the insane with either explosives or poison gas. Dr. Widmann of the Criminal Police was sent to Nebe in Minsk, but before he left, Dr. Widmann discussed with the director of the Criminal Police Technological Institute, Dr. Hess, ways of using the carbon monoxide gas from automobile exhaust for killing operations in the East, based on the experience gained from the euthansia program. Dr. Widmann took to Minsk 400 kgs of explosive material and the metal pipes required for the gassing installations.

Nebe and Dr. Widmann carried out an experimental killing using explosives. Twenty-five mentally ill people were locked into two bunkers in a forest outside Minsk. The first explosion killed only some of them, and it took much time and trouble until the second explosion killed the rest. Explosives therefore were unsatisfactory.

A few days later an experiment with poison gas was carried out by Nebe and Dr. Widmann in Mogilev. In the local lunatic asylum, a room with twenty to thirty of the insane was closed hermetically, and two pipes were driven into the wall. A car was parked outside, and one of the metal pipes that Dr. Widmann had brought connected the exhaust of the car to the pipe in the wall. The engine was turned on and carbon

monoxide began seeping into the room. After eight minutes, the people in the room were still alive. A second car was connected to the other pipe in the wall. The two cars were operated simultaneously, and a few minutes later all those in the room were dead.

After these experimental executions, Nebe came up with the idea of constructing a car with a hermetically sealed cabin for killing purposes. The carbon monoxide from the car's exhaust would be channeled into the sealed cabin, in which the victims stood. Nebe discussed the technical aspects of the idea with Dr. Hess and together they brought the proposal before Heydrich who adopted it. (8)

The Technical Department of the Reich Security Main Office, headed by SS Obersturmbannführer Walter Rauff, developed a special vehicle for killing purposes. This vehicle resembled an ambulance or refrigerator truck and contained a hermetically sealed rear cabin. The victims were placed in the cabin and carbon monoxide was introduced by means of a pipe. The gassing process took between fifteen and thirty minutes. During this time the van was driven from the loading site to prepared graves.

Two types of gas vans had been built: a larger one, 5.8 meters in length, and a smaller one, measuring 4.5 meters. Both were about 2.5 meters wide and 1.7 meters high. The bigger one could accommodate between 130 and 150 people, when densely packed inside, and the smaller one from 80 to 100. (9)

The gas vans were supplied to the Einsatzgruppen and to the Chelmno death camps in November-December 1941. The killing in Chelmno began on December 8, 1941. By the middle of 1942, about thirty gas vans had been produced by a private car manufacturer, the Gabschat Farengewerke GMBH, Will=Walter Strasse 32-38, Berlin. (10)

A few weeks before the first gas vans were supplied to the Einsatzgruppen, in late October 1941, Dr. Alfred Wetzel of the Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Territories wrote to the Reichskommissar for Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, of a proposal made by Viktor Brack to set up permanent gassing facilities in Ostland for mass extermination based on experience and help of the euthanasia program. With the cessation of the euthanasia program in Germany, its personnel were available and looking for new tasks. (11)

The permanent gassing facilities were intended to lighten the task of Nazi authorities in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union in carrying out their killing operations. But the proposal of Dr. Wetzel and of Brack was not implemented in Ostland. The unemployed 'euthanasia' personnel were assigned to another and bigger task - the erection of camps with gassing facilities, where annihilation of the Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories of Poland would be carried out. The successful experiments in

Auschwitz and the development of the gas vans had provided the solution of the technical problems involved.

(8) YVA, TR-10/959, pp. 45-47, the trial against Dr. Widmann; Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen, pp. 81-82

(9) Edward Serwanski, Oboz Zaglady w Chelmnie nad Narem (hereafter Chelmno), Poznan, 1964, p. 45; Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen, p. 84, gives the number of 50 - 60 people in the Saurer and 25 - 30 people in the Diamond car.

(10) Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen, pp. 84 - 86

(11) Nuremberg Documents, PS-510

Sources: Arad, Yitzak. *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*. IN: Indiana University Press, 1987, pp. 10-11, and *Electric Zen: An Einsatzgruppen Electronic Repository*.

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confirmed in other accounts and occurred all too often. The Holocaust, after all, is a story with far too few heroes and all too many perpetrators and victims. What is wrong with the German portrayals is a multifaceted distortion in perspective. The policemen were all but silent about Polish help to Jews and German punishment for such help. Almost nothing was said of the German role in inciting the Polish "betrayals" the policemen so hypocritically condemned. Nor was any note made of the fact that large units of murderous auxiliaries—the notorious Hiwis—were not recruited from the Polish population, in stark contrast to other nationalities in pervasively anti-Semitic eastern Europe. In some ways, therefore, the German policemen's comments about Poles reveal as much about the former as the latter.

18

Ordinary Men

Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101
and the Final Solution in Poland.

Christopher R. Browning, Harper Perennial
New York, 1992

WHY DID MOST MEN IN RESERVE POLICE BATTALION 101 become killers, while only a minority of perhaps 10 percent—and certainly no more than 20 percent—did not? A number of explanations have been invoked in the past to explain such behavior: wartime brutalization, racism, segmentation and routinization of the task, special selection of the perpetrators, careerism, obedience to orders, deference to authority, ideological indoctrination, and conformity. These factors are applicable in varying degrees, but none without qualification.

Wars have invariably been accompanied by atrocities. As John Dower has noted in his remarkable book, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, "war hates" induce "war crimes."¹ Above all, when deeply embedded negative racial

stereotypes are added to the brutalization inherent in sending armed men to kill one another on a massive scale, the fragile tissue of war conventions and rules of combat is even more frequently and viciously broken on all sides. Hence the difference between more conventional war—between Germany and the Western allies, for example—and the “race wars” of the recent past. From the Nazi “war of destruction” in eastern Europe and “war against the Jews” to the “war without mercy” in the Pacific and most recently Vietnam, soldiers have all too often tortured and slaughtered unarmed civilians and helpless prisoners, and committed numerous other atrocities. Dower’s account of entire American units in the Pacific openly boasting of a “take no prisoners” policy and routinely collecting body parts of Japanese soldiers as battlefield souvenirs is chilling reading for anyone who smugly assumes that war atrocities were a monopoly of the Nazi regime.

War, and especially race war, leads to brutalization, which leads to atrocity. This common thread, it could be argued, runs from Bromberg² and Babi Yar through New Guinea and Manila and on to My Lai. But if war, and especially race war, was a vital context within which Reserve Police Battalion 101 operated (as I shall indeed argue), how much does the notion of wartime brutalization explain the specific behavior of the policemen at Józefów and after? In particular, what distinctions must be made between various kinds of war crimes and the mind-sets of the men who commit them?

Many of the most notorious wartime atrocities—Oradour and Malmédy, the Japanese rampage through Manila, the American slaughter of prisoners and mutilation of corpses on many Pacific islands, and the massacre at My Lai—involved a kind of “battlefield frenzy.” Soldiers who were inured to violence, numbed to the taking of human life, embittered over their own casualties, and frustrated by the tenacity of an insidious and seemingly inhuman enemy sometimes exploded and at other times grimly resolved to have their revenge at the first opportunity. Though atrocities of this kind were too often tolerated, condoned, or

tacitly (sometimes even explicitly) encouraged by elements of the command structure, they did not represent official government policy.³ Despite the hate-filled propaganda of each nation and the exterminatory rhetoric of many leaders and commanders, such atrocities still represented a breakdown in discipline and the chain of command. They were not “standard operating procedure.”

Other kinds of atrocity, lacking the immediacy of battlefield frenzy and fully expressing official government policy, decidedly were “standard operating procedure.” The fire-bombing of German and Japanese cities, the enslavement and murderous maltreatment of foreign laborers in German camps and factories or along the Siam-Burma railroad, the reprisal shooting of a hundred civilians for every German soldier killed by partisan attack in Yugoslavia or elsewhere in eastern Europe—these were not the spontaneous explosions or cruel revenge of brutalized men but the methodically executed policies of government.

Both kinds of atrocities occur in the brutalizing context of war, but the men who carry out “atrocities by policy” are in a different state of mind. They act not out of frenzy, bitterness, and frustration but with calculation. Clearly the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, in implementing the systematic Nazi policy of exterminating European Jewry, belong in the second category. Except for a few of the oldest men who were veterans of World War I, and a few NCOs who had been transferred to Poland from Russia, the men of the battalion had not seen battle or encountered a deadly enemy. Most of them had not fired a shot in anger or ever been fired on, much less lost comrades fighting at their side. Thus, wartime brutalization through prior combat was not an immediate experience directly influencing the policemen’s behavior at Józefów. Once the killing began, however, the men became increasingly brutalized. As in combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier. In this sense, brutalization was not the cause but the effect of these men’s behavior.

The context of war must surely be taken into account in a more

general way than as a cause of combat-induced brutalization and frenzy, however. War, a struggle between "our people" and "the enemy," creates a polarized world in which "the enemy" is easily objectified and removed from the community of human obligation. War is the most conducive environment in which governments can adopt "atrocious policy" and encounter few difficulties in implementing it. As John Dower has observed, "The Dehumanization of the Other contributed immeasurably to the psychological distancing that facilitated killing."⁴ Distancing, not frenzy and brutalization, is one of the keys to the behavior of Reserve Police Battalion 101. War and negative racial stereotyping were two mutually reinforcing factors in this distancing.

Many scholars of the Holocaust, especially Raul Hilberg, have emphasized the bureaucratic and administrative aspects of the destruction process.⁵ This approach emphasizes the degree to which modern bureaucratic life fosters a functional and physical distancing in the same way that war and negative racial stereotyping promote a psychological distancing between perpetrator and victim. Indeed, many of the perpetrators of the Holocaust were so-called desk murderers whose role in the mass extermination was greatly facilitated by the bureaucratic nature of their participation. Their jobs frequently consisted of tiny steps in the overall killing process, and they performed them in a routine manner, never seeing the victims their actions affected. Segmented, routinized, and depersonalized, the job of the bureaucrat or specialist—whether it involved confiscating property, scheduling trains, drafting legislation, sending telegrams, or compiling lists—could be performed without confronting the reality of mass murder. Such a luxury, of course, was not enjoyed by the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, who were quite literally saturated in the blood of victims shot at point-blank range. No one confronted the reality of mass murder more directly than the men in the woods at Józefów. Segmentation and routinization, the depersonalizing aspects of bureaucratized killing, cannot explain the battalion's initial behavior there.

The facilitating psychological effect of a division of labor for the

killing process was not totally negligible, however. While members of the battalion did indeed carry out further shootings single-handed at Serokomla, Talcyn, and Kock, and later in the course of innumerable "Jew hunts," the larger actions involved joint ventures and splitting of duties. The policemen always provided the cordon, and many were directly involved in driving the Jews from their homes to the assembly point and then to the death trains. But at the largest mass shootings, "specialists" were brought in to do the killing. At Łomazy, the Hiwis would have done the shooting by themselves if they had not been too drunk to finish the job. At Majdanek and Poniatowa during *Erntefest*, the Security Police of Lublin furnished the shooters. The deportations to Treblinka had an added advantage psychologically. Not only was the killing done by others, but it was done out of sight of the men who cleared the ghettos and forced the Jews onto the death trains. After the sheer horror of Józefów, the policemen's detachment, their sense of not really participating in or being responsible for their subsequent actions in ghetto clearing and cordon duty, is stark testimony to the desensitizing effects of division of labor.

To what degree, if any, did the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 represent a process of special selection for the particular task of implementing the Final Solution? According to recent research by the German historian Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, considerable time and effort was expended by the personnel department of Reinhard Heydrich's Reich Security Main Office to select and assign officers for the Einsatzgruppen.⁶ Himmler, anxious to get the right man for the right job, was also careful in his selection of Higher SS and Police Leaders and others in key positions. Hence his insistence on keeping the unsavory Globocnik in Lublin, despite his past record of corruption and objections to his appointment even within the Nazi Party.⁷ In her book *Into That Darkness*, a classic study of Franz Stangl, the commandant of Treblinka, Gitta Sereny concluded that special care must have been taken to choose just 96 of some 400 people to be transferred from the euthanasia program in

Germany to the death camps in Poland.⁸ Did any similar policy of selection, the careful choosing of personnel particularly suited for mass murder, determine the makeup of Reserve Police Battalion 101?

Concerning the rank and file, the answer is a qualified no. By most criteria, in fact, just the opposite was the case. By age, geographical origin, and social background, the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were least likely to be considered apt material out of which to mold future mass killers. On the basis of these criteria, the rank and file—middle-aged, mostly working-class, from Hamburg—did not represent special selection or even random selection but for all practical purposes negative selection for the task at hand.

In one respect, however, an earlier and more general form of selection may have taken place. The high percentage (25 percent) of Party members among the battalion's rank and file, particularly disproportionate for those of working-class origin, suggests that the initial conscription of reservists—long before their use as killers in the Final Solution was envisaged—was not entirely random. If Himmler at first thought of the reservists as a potential internal security force while large numbers of active police were stationed abroad, it is logical that he would have been leery of conscripting men of dubious political reliability. One solution would have been to draft middle-aged Party members for reserve duty in higher proportions than from the population at large. But the existence of such a policy is merely a suspicion, for no documents have been found to prove that Party members were deliberately drafted into the reserve units of the Order Police.

The case for special selection of officers is even more difficult to make. By SS standards, Major Trapp was a patriotic German but traditional and overly sentimental—what in Nazi Germany was scornfully considered both "weak" and "reactionary." It is certainly revealing that despite the conscious effort of Himmler and Heydrich to amalgamate the SS and the police, and despite the fact that Trapp was a decorated World War I veteran, career

policeman, and *Alter Kämpfer* who joined the Party in 1932, he was never taken into the SS. He was certainly not given command of Reserve Police Battalion 101 and specifically assigned to the Lublin district because of his presumed suitability as a mass killer.

The remaining officers of the battalion scarcely evidence a policy of careful selection either. Despite their impeccable Party credentials, both Hoffmann and Wohlauf had been shunted into slow-track careers by SS standards. Wohlauf's career in the Order Police in particular was marked by mediocre, even negative, evaluations. Ironically, it was the relatively old (forty-eight) Reserve Lieutenant Gnade, not the two young SS captains, who turned out to be the most ruthless and sadistic killer, a man who took pleasure in his work. Finally, the assignment of Reserve Lieutenant Buchmann could scarcely have been made by anyone consciously selecting prospective killers.

In short, Reserve Police Battalion 101 was not sent to Lublin to murder Jews because it was composed of men specially selected or deemed particularly suited for the task. On the contrary, the battalion was the "dregs" of the manpower pool available at that stage of the war. It was employed to kill Jews because it was the only kind of unit available for such behind-the-lines duties. Most likely, Globocnik simply assumed as a matter of course that whatever battalion came his way would be up to this murderous task, regardless of its composition. If so, he may have been disappointed in the immediate aftermath of Józefów, but in the long run events proved him correct.

Many studies of Nazi killers have suggested a different kind of selection, namely self-selection to the Party and SS by unusually violence-prone people. Shortly after the war, Theodor Adorno and others developed the notion of the "authoritarian personality." Feeling that situational or environmental influences had already been studied, they chose to focus on hitherto neglected psychological factors. They began with the hypothesis that certain deep-seated personality traits made "potentially fascist individuals" particularly susceptible to antidemocratic propa-

ganda.⁹ Their investigations led them to compile a list of the crucial traits (tested for by the so-called F-scale) of the "authoritarian personality": rigid adherence to conventional values; submissiveness to authority figures; aggressiveness toward outgroups; opposition to introspection, reflection, and creativity; a tendency to superstition and stereotyping; preoccupation with power and "toughness"; destructiveness and cynicism; projectivity ("the disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world" and "the projection outward of unconscious emotional impulses"); and an exaggerated concern with sexuality. They concluded that the antidemocratic individual "harbors strong underlying aggressive impulses" and fascist movements allow him to project this aggression through sanctioned violence against ideologically targeted outgroups.¹⁰ Zygmunt Bauman has summed up this approach as follows: "Nazism was cruel because Nazis were cruel; and the Nazis were cruel because cruel people tended to become Nazis."¹¹ He is highly critical of the methodology of Adorno and his colleagues, which neglected social influences, and of the implication that ordinary people did not commit fascist atrocities.

Subsequent advocates of a psychological explanation have modified the Adorno approach by more explicitly merging psychological and situational (social, cultural, and institutional) factors. Studying a group of men who had volunteered for the SS, John Steiner concluded that "a self-selection process for brutality appears to exist."¹² He proposed the notion of the "sleeper"—certain personality characteristics of violence-prone individuals that usually remain latent but can be activated under certain conditions. In the chaos of post-World War I Germany, people testing high on the F-scale were attracted in disproportionate numbers to National Socialism as a "subculture of violence," and in particular to the SS, which provided the incentives and support for the full realization of their violent potential. After World War II, such men reverted to law-abiding behavior. Thus Steiner concludes that "the situation tended to

be the most immediate determinant of SS behavior" in rousing the "sleeper."

Ervin Staub accepts the notion that "some people become perpetrators as a result of their personality; they are 'self-selected'." But he concludes that Steiner's "sleeper" is a very common trait and that under particular circumstances most people have a capacity for extreme violence and the destruction of human life.¹³ Indeed, Staub is quite emphatic that "ordinary psychological processes and normal, common human motivations and certain basic but not inevitable tendencies in human thought and feeling" are the "primary sources" of the human capacity for mass destruction of human life. "Evil that arises out of ordinary thinking and is committed by ordinary people is the norm, not the exception."¹⁴

If Staub makes Steiner's "sleeper" unexceptional, Zygmunt Bauman goes so far as to dismiss it as a "metaphysical prop." For Bauman "cruelty is social in its origin much more than it is characterological."¹⁵ Bauman argues that most people "slip" into the roles society provides them, and he is very critical of any implication that "faulty personalities" are the cause of human cruelty. For him the exception—the real "sleeper"—is the rare individual who has the capacity to resist authority and assert moral autonomy but who is seldom aware of this hidden strength until put to the test.

Those who emphasize the relative or absolute importance of situational factors over individual psychological characteristics invariably point to Philip Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment.¹⁶ Screening out everyone who scored beyond the normal range on a battery of psychological tests, including one that measured "rigid adherence to conventional values and a submissive, uncritical attitude toward authority" (i.e., the F-scale for the "authoritarian personality"), Zimbardo randomly divided his homogeneous "normal" test group into guards and prisoners and placed them in a simulated prison. Though outright physical violence was barred, within six days the inherent structure of

prison life—in which guards operating on three-man shifts had to devise ways of controlling the more numerous prisoner population—had produced rapidly escalating brutality, humiliation, and dehumanization. “Most dramatic and distressing to us was the observation of the ease with which sadistic behavior could be elicited in individuals who were not ‘sadistic types.’” The prison situation alone, Zimbardo concluded, was “a *sufficient* condition to produce aberrant, anti-social behavior.”

Perhaps most relevant to this study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 is the spectrum of behavior that Zimbardo discovered in his sample of eleven guards. About one-third of the guards emerged as “cruel and tough.” They constantly invented new forms of harassment and enjoyed their newfound power to behave cruelly and arbitrarily. A middle group of guards was “tough but fair.” They “played by the rules” and did not go out of their way to mistreat prisoners. Only two (i.e., less than 20 percent) emerged as “good guards” who did not punish prisoners and even did small favors for them.¹⁷

Zimbardo’s spectrum of guard behavior bears an uncanny resemblance to the groupings that emerged within Reserve Police Battalion 101: a nucleus of increasingly enthusiastic killers who volunteered for the firing squads and “Jew hunts”; a larger group of policemen who performed as shooters and ghetto clearers when assigned but who did not seek opportunities to kill (and in some cases refrained from killing, contrary to standing orders, when no one was monitoring their actions); and a small group (less than 20 percent) of refusers and evaders.

In addition to this striking resemblance between Zimbardo’s guards and the policemen of Reserve Police Battalion 101, one other factor must be taken into account in weighing the relevance of “self-selection” on the basis of psychological predisposition. The battalion was composed of reserve lieutenants and men who had simply been conscripted after the outbreak of the war. The noncommissioned officers had joined the Order Police before the war because they hoped either to pursue a career in the police (in this case the metropolitan police of Hamburg, not the

political police or Gestapo) or to avoid being drafted into the army. In these circumstances it is difficult to perceive any mechanism of self-selection through which the reserve battalions of the Order Police could have attracted an unusual concentration of men of violent predisposition. Indeed, if Nazi Germany offered unusually numerous career paths that sanctioned and rewarded violent behavior, random conscription from the remaining population—already drained of its most violence-prone individuals—would arguably produce even less than an average number of “authoritarian personalities.” Self-selection on the basis of personality traits, in short, offers little to explain the behavior of the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101.

If special selection played little role and self-selection seemingly none, what about self-interest and careerism? Those who admitted being among the shooters did not justify their behavior on the basis of career considerations. In contrast, however, the issue of careerism was most clearly articulated by several of those who did not shoot. Lieutenant Buchmann and Gustav Michaelson, in explaining their exceptional behavior, noted that unlike their fellow officers or comrades, they had well-established civilian careers to return to and did not need to consider possible negative repercussions on a future career in the police.¹⁸ Buchmann was clearly reluctant to have the prosecution use his behavior against the defendants and thus may have emphasized the career factor as constituting less of a moral indictment of men who acted differently. But Michaelson’s testimony was not influenced by any such calculations or reticence.

In addition to the testimony of those who felt free of career considerations, there is the behavior of those who clearly did not. Captain Hoffmann is the classic example of a man driven by careerism. Crippled by stomach cramps—psychosomatically induced, at least in part, if not entirely, by the murderous actions of the battalion—he tenaciously tried to hide his illness from his superiors rather than use it to escape his situation. He risked his men’s open suspicion of cowardice in a vain attempt to keep his company command. And when he was finally relieved, he bitterly

contested that career-threatening development as well. Given the number of men from Reserve Police Battalion 101 who remained in the police after the war, career ambitions must have played an important role for many others as well.

Among the perpetrators, of course, orders have traditionally been the most frequently cited explanation for their own behavior. The authoritarian political culture of the Nazi dictatorship, savagely intolerant of overt dissent, along with the standard military necessity of obedience to orders and ruthless enforcement of discipline, created a situation in which individuals had *no choice*. Orders were orders, and no one in such a political climate could be expected to disobey them, they insisted. Disobedience surely meant the concentration camp if not immediate execution, possibly for their families as well. The perpetrators had found themselves in a situation of impossible "duress" and therefore could not be held responsible for their actions. Such, at least, is what defendants said in trial after trial in postwar Germany.

There is a general problem with this explanation, however. Quite simply, in the past forty-five years no defense attorney or defendant in any of the hundreds of postwar trials has been able to document a single case in which refusal to obey an order to kill unarmed civilians resulted in the allegedly inevitable dire punishment.¹⁹ The punishment or censure that occasionally did result from such disobedience was never commensurate with the gravity of the crimes the men had been asked to commit.

A variation on the explanation of inescapable orders is "putative duress." Even if the consequences of disobedience would not have been so dire, the men who complied could not have known that at the time. They sincerely thought that they had had no choice when faced with orders to kill. Undoubtedly in many units zealous officers bullied their men with ominous threats. In Reserve Police Battalion 101, as we have seen, certain officers and NCOs, like Drucker and Hergert, tried to make everyone shoot initially, even if they subsequently released those not up to continuing. And other officers and NCOs, like Hoppner and

Ostmann, picked out individuals known as nonshooters and pressured them to kill, sometimes successfully.

But as a general rule, even putative duress does not hold for Reserve Police Battalion 101. From the time Major Trapp, with choked voice and tears streaming down his cheeks, offered to excuse those "not up to it" at Józefów and protected the first man to take up his offer from Captain Hoffmann's wrath, a situation of putative duress did not exist in the battalion. Trapp's subsequent behavior, not just excusing Lieutenant Buchmann from participation in Jewish actions but clearly protecting a man who made no secret of his disapproval, only made matters clearer. A set of unwritten "ground rules" emerged within the battalion. For small shooting actions, volunteers were requested or shooters were chosen from among those who were known to be willing to kill or who simply did not make the effort to keep their distance when firing squads were being formed. For large actions, those who would not kill were not compelled. Even officers' attempts to force individual nonshooters to kill could be refused, for the men knew that the officers could not appeal to Major Trapp.

Everyone but the most open critics, like Buchmann, did have to participate in cordon duty and roundups, but in such circumstances individuals could still make their own decisions about shooting. The testimonies are filled with stories of men who disobeyed standing orders during the ghetto-clearing operations and did not shoot infants or those attempting to hide or escape. Even men who admitted to having taken part in firing squads claimed not to have shot in the confusion and melee of the ghetto clearings or out on patrol when their behavior could not be closely observed.

If obedience to orders out of fear of dire punishment is not a valid explanation, what about "obedience to authority" in the more general sense used by Stanley Milgram—deference simply as a product of socialization and evolution, a "deeply ingrained behavior tendency" to comply with the directives of those positioned hierarchically above, even to the point of performing repugnant actions in violation of "universally accepted" moral

norms.²⁰ In a series of now famous experiments, Milgram tested the individual's ability to resist authority that was not backed by any external coercive threat. Naive volunteer subjects were instructed by a "scientific authority" in an alleged learning experiment to inflict an escalating series of fake electric shocks upon an actor/victim, who responded with carefully programmed "voice feedback"—an escalating series of complaints, cries of pain, calls for help, and finally fateful silence. In the standard voice feedback experiment, two-thirds of Milgram's subjects were "obedient" to the point of inflicting extreme pain.²¹

Several variations on the experiment produced significantly different results. If the actor/victim was shielded so that the subject could hear and see no response, obedience was much greater. If the subject had both visual and voice feedback, compliance to the extreme fell to 40 percent. If the subject had to touch the actor/victim physically by forcing his hand onto an electric plate to deliver the shocks, obedience dropped to 30 percent. If a nonauthority figure gave orders, obedience was nil. If the naive subject performed a subsidiary or accessory task but did not personally inflict the electric shocks, obedience was nearly total. In contrast, if the subject was part of an actor/peer group that staged a carefully planned refusal to continue following the directions of the authority figure, the vast majority of subjects (90 percent) joined their peer group and desisted as well. If the subject was given complete discretion as to the level of electric shock to administer, all but a few sadists consistently delivered a minimal shock. When not under the direct surveillance of the scientist, many of the subjects "cheated" by giving lower shocks than prescribed, even though they were unable to confront authority and abandon the experiment.²²

Milgram adduced a number of factors to account for such an unexpectedly high degree of potentially murderous obedience to a noncoercive authority. An evolutionary bias favors the survival of people who can adapt to hierarchical situations and organized social activity. Socialization through family, school, and military service, as well as a whole array of rewards and punishments

within society generally, reinforces and internalizes a tendency toward obedience. A seemingly voluntary entry into an authority system "perceived" as legitimate creates a strong sense of obligation. Those within the hierarchy adopt the authority's perspective or "definition of the situation" (in this case, as an important scientific experiment rather than the infliction of physical torture). The notions of "loyalty, duty, discipline," requiring competent performance in the eyes of authority, become moral imperatives overriding any identification with the victim. Normal individuals enter an "agentic state" in which they are the instrument of another's will. In such a state, they no longer feel personally responsible for the content of their actions but only for how well they perform.²³

Once entangled, people encounter a series of "binding factors" or "cementing mechanisms" that make disobedience or refusal even more difficult. The momentum of the process discourages any new or contrary initiative. The "situational obligation" or etiquette makes refusal appear improper, rude, or even an immoral breach of obligation. And a socialized anxiety over potential punishment for disobedience acts as a further deterrent.²⁴

Milgram made direct reference to the similarities between human behavior in his experiments and under the Nazi regime. He concluded, "Men are led to kill with little difficulty."²⁵ Milgram was aware of significant differences in the two situations, however. Quite explicitly he acknowledged that the subjects of his experiments were assured that no permanent physical damage would result from their actions. The subjects were under no threat or duress themselves. And finally, the actor/victims were not the object of "intense devaluation" through systematic indoctrination of the subjects. In contrast, the killers of the Third Reich lived in a police state where the consequences of disobedience could be drastic and they were subjected to intense indoctrination, but they also knew they were not only inflicting pain but destroying human life.²⁶

Was the massacre at Józefów a kind of radical Milgram

experiment that took place in a Polish forest with real killers and victims rather than in a social psychology laboratory with naive subjects and actor/victims? Are the actions of Reserve Police Battalion 101 explained by Milgram's observations and conclusions? There are some difficulties in explaining Józefów as a case of deference to authority, for none of Milgram's experimental variations exactly paralleled the historical situation at Józefów, and the relevant differences constitute too many variables to draw firm conclusions in any scientific sense. Nonetheless, many of Milgram's insights find graphic confirmation in the behavior and testimony of the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101.

At Józefów the authority system to which the men were responding was quite complex, unlike the laboratory situation. Major Trapp represented not a strong but a very weak authority figure. He weepingly conceded the frightful nature of the task at hand and invited the older reserve policemen to excuse themselves. If Trapp was a weak immediate authority figure, he did invoke a more distant system of authority that was anything but weak. The orders for the massacre had been received from the highest quarter, he said. Trapp himself and the battalion as a unit were bound by the orders of this distant authority, even if Trapp's concern for his men exempted individual policemen.

To what were the vast majority of Trapp's men responding when they did not step out? Was it to authority as represented either by Trapp or his superiors? Were they responding to Trapp not primarily as an authority figure, but as an individual—a popular and beloved officer whom they would not leave in the lurch? And what about other factors? Milgram himself notes that people far more frequently invoke authority than conformity to explain their behavior, for only the former seems to absolve them of personal responsibility. "Subjects deny conformity and embrace obedience as the explanation of their actions."²⁷ Yet many policemen admitted responding to the pressures of conformity—how would they be seen in the eyes of their comrades?—not authority. On Milgram's own view, such admission was the tip of the iceberg, and this factor must have been

even more important than the men conceded in their testimony. If so, conformity assumes a more central role than authority at Józefów.

Milgram tested the effects of peer pressure in bolstering the individual's capacity to resist authority. When actor/collaborators bolted, the naive subjects found it much easier to follow. Milgram also attempted to test for the reverse, that is, the role of conformity in intensifying the capacity to inflict pain.²⁸ Three subjects, two collaborators and one naive, were instructed by the scientist/authority figure to inflict pain at the lowest level anyone among them proposed. When a naive subject acting alone had been given full discretion to set the level of electric shock, the subject had almost invariably inflicted minimal pain. But when the two collaborators, always going first, proposed a step-by-step escalation of electric shock, the naive subject was significantly influenced. Though the individual variation was wide, the average result was the selection of a level of electric shock halfway between no increase and a consistent step-by-step increase. This is still short of a test of peer pressure as compensation for the deficiencies of weak authority. There was no weeping but beloved scientist inviting subjects to leave the electric shock panel while other men—with whom the subjects had comradesly relations and before whom they would feel compelled to appear manly and tough—stayed and continued to inflict painful shocks. Indeed, it would be almost impossible to construct an experiment to test such a scenario, which would require true comradesly relations between a naive subject and the actor/collaborators. Nonetheless, the mutual reinforcement of authority and conformity seems to have been clearly demonstrated by Milgram.

If the multifaceted nature of authority at Józefów and the key role of conformity among the policemen are not quite parallel to Milgram's experiments, they nonetheless render considerable support to his conclusions, and some of his observations are clearly confirmed. Direct proximity to the horror of the killing significantly increased the number of men who would no longer

comply. On the other hand, with the division of labor and removal of the killing process to the death camps, the men felt scarcely any responsibility at all for their actions. As in Milgram's experiment without direct surveillance, many policemen did not comply with orders when not directly supervised; they mitigated their behavior when they could do so without personal risk but were unable to refuse participation in the battalion's killing operations openly.

One factor that admittedly was not the focal point of Milgram's experiments, indoctrination, and another that was only partially touched upon, conformity, require further investigation. Milgram did stipulate "definition of the situation" or ideology, that which gives meaning and coherence to the social occasion, as a crucial antecedent of deference to authority. Controlling the manner in which people interpret their world is one way to control behavior, Milgram argues. If they accept authority's ideology, action follows logically and willingly. Hence "ideological justification is vital in obtaining willing obedience, for it permits the person to see his behavior as serving a desirable end."²⁸

In Milgram's experiments, "overarching ideological justification" was present in the form of a tacit and unquestioned faith in the goodness of science and its contribution to progress. But there was no systematic attempt to "devalue" the actor/victim or inculcate the subject with a particular ideology. Milgram hypothesized that the more destructive behavior of people in Nazi Germany, under much less direct surveillance, was a consequence of an internalization of authority achieved "through relatively long processes of indoctrination, of a sort not possible within the course of a laboratory hour."³⁰

To what degree, then, did the conscious inculcation of Nazi doctrines shape the behavior of the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101P? Were they subjected to such a barrage of clever and insidious propaganda that they lost the capacity for independent thought and responsible action? Were devaluation of the Jews and exhortations to kill them central to this indoctrination?

The popular term for intense indoctrination and psychological manipulation, emerging from the Korean War experience of some captured American soldiers, is "brainwashing." Were these killers in some general sense "brainwashed"?

Unquestionably, Himmler set a premium on the ideological indoctrination of members of the SS and the police. They were to be not just efficient soldiers and policemen but ideologically motivated warriors, crusaders against the political and racial enemies of the Third Reich.³¹ Indoctrination efforts embraced not only the elite organizations of the SS but also the Order Police, extending even to the lowly reserve police, though the reservists scarcely fit Himmler's notion of the new Nazi racial aristocracy. For instance, membership in the SS required proof of ancestry untainted by Jewish blood through five generations. In contrast, even "first-degree *Mischlinge*" (people with two Jewish grandparents) and their spouses were not banned from service in the reserve police until October 1942; "second-degree *Mischlinge*" (one Jewish grandparent) and their spouses were not banned until April 1943.³²

In its guidelines for basic training of January 23, 1940, the Order Police Main Office decreed that in addition to physical fitness, use of weapons, and police techniques, all Order Police battalions were to be strengthened in character and ideology.³³ Basic training included a one-month unit on "ideological education." One topic for the first week was "Race as the Basis of Our World View," followed the second week by "Maintaining the Purity of Blood."³⁴ Beyond basic training, the police battalions, both active and reserve, were to receive continued military and ideological training from their officers.³⁵ Officers were required to attend one-week workshops that included one hour of ideological instruction for themselves and one hour of practice in the ideological instruction of others.³⁶ A five-part study plan of January 1941 included the subsections "Understanding of Race as the Basis of Our World View," "The Jewish Question in Germany," and "Maintaining the Purity of German Blood."³⁷

Explicit instructions were issued on the spirit and frequency of

this continuing ideological training, for which the National Socialist world view was to be the "plumb line." Every day, or at least every other day, the men were to be informed about current events and their proper understanding in ideological perspective. Every week officers were to hold thirty- to forty-five-minute sessions in which they delivered a short lecture or read an edifying excerpt from suggested books or specially prepared SS pamphlets. The officers were to choose some theme—loyalty, comradeship, the offensive spirit—through which the educational goals of National Socialism could be clearly expressed. Monthly sessions were to be held on the most important themes of the time and could feature officers and educational personnel of the SS and Party.³⁸

The officers of Reserve Police Battalion 101 obviously complied with these directives on ideological education. In December 1942 Captains Hoffmann and Wohlauf and Lieutenant Gnade were recognized for their activities "in the area of ideological training and care for the troops." They were each awarded a book to be presented by their commanding officer.³⁹ Himmler's undoubted intentions aside, however, a look at the actual materials used to indoctrinate Reserve Police Battalion 101 raises serious doubts about the adequacy of SS indoctrination as an explanation for the men becoming killers.

Two kinds of Order Police educational materials are preserved in the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv) in Koblenz. The first are two series of weekly circulars issued by the department for "ideological education" of the Order Police between 1940 and 1944.⁴⁰ A few of the lead articles were written by such Nazi luminaries and noted ideological firebrands as Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg (Hitler's minister for occupied Russia), and Walter Gross (the head of the Party's Office of Racial Politics). The general racist perspective was of course pervasive. Nonetheless, in some two hundred issues altogether, relatively little space was devoted *explicitly* to anti-Semitism and the Jewish question. One issue, "Jewry and Criminality"—exceptionally ponderous even by the quite undistinguished standards of the

two series—concluded that alleged Jewish characteristics, such as "immoderateness," "vanity," "curiosity," "the denial of reality," "soullessness," "stupidity," "malice," and "brutality," were the exact characteristics of the "perfect criminal."⁴¹ Such prose may have put readers to sleep; it certainly did not turn them into killers.

The only other article devoted entirely to the Jewish question, on the back page in December 1941, was entitled "A Goal of This War: Europe Free of Jews." It noted ominously that "the word of the Führer, that a new war instigated by the Jews would not bring about the collapse of anti-Semitic Germany but on the contrary the end of the Jews, was now being carried out." "The definitive solution of the Jewish problem, that is, not only depriving them of power but actually removing this parasitical race from the family of European peoples," was imminent. "What appeared impossible two years ago was now becoming reality step by step: at the end of this war there would exist a Europe free of Jews."⁴²

Recalling Hitler's prophecy and invoking his authority in connection with the ultimate goal of a "Europe free of Jews" was not, of course, peculiar to SS indoctrination materials. On the contrary, the same message was widely circulated to the general public. How little these materials were directed at "brainwashing" the reserve police into becoming mass murderers, moreover, can be seen from another article of September 20, 1942, the single item in the entire two series devoted to the reserve police. Far from steeling them to be superhumanly inhuman to accomplish great tasks, the article assumed that the reserve police were doing nothing of noticeable importance. To boost their morale, presumably threatened above all by boredom, "older reservists" were assured that no matter how innocuous their jobs might seem, in total war "everyone is important."⁴³ By this time the "older reservists" of Reserve Police Battalion 101 had carried out the mass shootings at Józefów and Łomazy and the initial deportations from Parczew and Międzyrzec. They stood on the eve of a climactic and murderous six-week assault on

the ghettos of northern Lublin. It is unlikely any of them would have found this article terribly relevant, much less inspiring.

A series of special pamphlets (four to six a year) "for the ideological education of the Order Police" constituted a second group of indoctrination materials. In 1941 one issue covered "The Blood Community of the German Peoples" and "The Great German Empire."⁴⁴ In 1942 there was an issue entitled "German Reorganizes Europe," and a "special issue" called "SS Man and the Question of Blood."⁴⁵ A large combined issue in 1943 was devoted to "The Politics of Race."⁴⁶ Beginning with the 1942 special issue on the question of blood but above all in the 1943 issue "The Politics of Race," the treatment of racial doctrine and the Jewish question became very thorough and systematic. The German "people" (*Volk*) or "blood community" (*Blutgemeinschaft*) was comprised of a mixture of six closely related European races, the largest (50 to 60 percent) being the Nordic race. Shaped by a severe northern climate that ruthlessly eliminated weak elements, the Nordic race was superior to any other in the world, as could be seen from German cultural and military achievements. The German *Volk* faced a constant struggle for survival ordained by nature, according to whose laws "all weak and inferior are destroyed" and "only the strong and powerful continue to propagate." To win this struggle, the *Volk* needed to do two things: conquer living space to provide for further population growth and preserve the purity of German blood. The fate of peoples who did not expand their numbers or preserve their racial purity could be seen in the examples of Sparta and Rome.

The main threat to a healthy awareness of the need for territorial expansion and racial purity came from doctrines propagating the essential equality of mankind. The first such doctrine was Christianity, spread by the Jew Paul. The second was Liberalism, emerging from the French Revolution—"the uprising of the racially inferior"—instigated by the Jew-ridden Freemasons. The third and greatest threat was Marxism/Bolshevism, authored by the Jew Karl Marx.

"The Jews are a racial mixture, which in contrast to all other peoples and races, preserves its essential character first of all through its parasitical instinct." With no regard for either consistency or logic, the pamphlet then asserted that the Jew kept his own race pure while striking at the existence of his host race through race mixing. No coexistence was possible between a race-conscious people and the Jews, only a struggle that would be won when "the last Jew had left our part of the earth." The present war was just such a struggle, one that would decide the fate of Europe. "With the destruction of the Jews," the last threat of European collapse would be removed.

For what explicit purpose were these pamphlets written? What conclusions did this review of the basic tenets of National Socialist race thinking urge upon the reader? Neither "The Question of Blood" nor "The Politics of Race" ended with a call to eliminate the racial enemy. Rather they concluded with exhortations to give birth to more Germans. The racial battle was in part a demographic battle determined by the laws of "fertility" and "selection." War was "counterselection in pure form," for not only did the best fall on the field of battle, but they did so before having children. "The victory of arms" required a "victory of children." As the SS represented a selection of predominantly Nordic elements within the German people, SS men had an obligation to marry early, choose young, racially pure, and fertile brides, and have large numbers of children.

A number of factors must be kept in mind, therefore, in evaluating the indoctrination of the reserve police through pamphlets such as these. First, the most detailed and thorough pamphlet was not even issued until 1943, after the northern Lublin security zone of Reserve Police Battalion 101 was virtually "free of Jews." It appeared too late to have played a role in indoctrinating this battalion for mass murder. Second, the 1942 pamphlet was clearly directed at the family obligations of the young SS man and particularly irrelevant to middle-aged reservists who had long ago made their decisions about marriage partner and size of family. Thus, even though available, it would

have seemed singularly inappropriate as the basis for one of the battalion's weekly or monthly indoctrination sessions.

Third, the age of the men affected their susceptibility to indoctrination in another way as well. Many of the Nazi perpetrators were very young men. They had been raised in a world in which Nazi values were the only "moral norms" they knew. It could be argued that such young men, schooled and formed solely under the conditions of the Nazi dictatorship, simply did not know any better. Killing Jews did not conflict with the value system they had grown up with, and hence indoctrination was much easier. Whatever the merits of such an argument, it clearly does not hold for the predominantly middle-aged men of Reserve Police Battalion 101. They were educated and spent their formative years in the pre-1933 period. Many came from a social milieu that was relatively unresponsive to National Socialism. They knew perfectly well the moral norms of German society before the Nazis. They had earlier standards by which to judge the Nazi policies they were asked to carry out.

Fourth, ideological tracts like those prepared for the Order Police certainly reflected the wider ambience within which the reserve policemen were trained and instructed as well as the political culture in which they had lived for the previous decade. As Lieutenant Drucker said with extraordinary understatement, "Under the influence of the times, my attitude to the Jews was marked by a certain aversion." The denigration of Jews and the proclamation of Germanic racial superiority was so constant, so pervasive, so relentless, that it must have shaped the general attitudes of masses of people in Germany, including the average reserve policeman.

Fifth and last, the pamphlets and materials that dealt with the Jews justified the necessity of a *Judenfret* Europe, seeking support and sympathy for such a goal, but they did not explicitly urge personal participation in achieving that goal through killing Jews. This point is worth mentioning, because some of the Order Police instructional guidelines concerning partisan warfare stated

quite plainly that each individual must be tough enough to kill partisans and, more important, "suspects."

The partisan struggle is a struggle for Bolshevism, it is not a people's movement. . . . The enemy must be *totally destroyed*. The incessant decision over life and death posed by the partisans and suspects is difficult even for the toughest soldier. But it must be done. He behaves correctly who, by setting aside all possible impulses of personal feeling, proceeds ruthlessly and mercilessly.⁴⁷

In all the surviving indoctrination materials of the Order Police, there is no parallel set of guidelines that attempts to prepare policemen to kill unarmed Jewish women and children. Certainly in Russia large numbers of Jews were murdered in the framework of killing "suspects" during antipartisan sweeps. In the Polish territories garrisoned by Reserve Police Battalion 101 in 1942, however, there simply was no major overlap between killing partisan suspects and killing Jews. For this unit, at least, the killing of Jews cannot be explained by brutal exhortations to kill partisans and "suspects."

One other comparison is pertinent here. Before the Einsatzgruppen entered Soviet territory, they underwent a two-month training period. Their preparation included visits and speeches by various SS luminaries who gave them "pep talks" about the coming "war of destruction." Four days before the invasion, the officers were recalled to Berlin for an intimate meeting with Reinhard Heydrich himself. In short, considerable effort was made to prepare these men for the mass murder they were going to perpetrate. Even the men of the police battalions that followed the Einsatzgruppen into Russia in the summer of 1941 were partially prepared for what awaited them. They were informed of the secret directive for the execution of captured Communists (the "commissar order") and the guidelines for the treatment of the civilian population. Some battalion command-

ers also attempted to inspire their troops through speeches, as did Daluge and Himmler when visiting. In contrast, both officers and men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were singularly unprepared for and surprised by the murderous task that awaited them.

In summary, the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, like the rest of German society, were immersed in a deluge of racist and anti-Semitic propaganda. Furthermore, the Order Police provided for indoctrination both in basic training and as an ongoing practice within each unit. Such incessant propagandizing must have had a considerable effect in reinforcing general notions of Germanic racial superiority and "a certain aversion" toward the Jews. However, much of the indoctrination material was clearly not targeted at older reservists and in some cases was highly inappropriate or irrelevant to them. And material specifically designed to harden the policemen for the personal task of killing Jews is conspicuously absent from the surviving documentation. One would have to be quite convinced of the manipulative powers of indoctrination to believe that any of this material could have deprived the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 of the capacity for independent thought. Influenced and conditioned in a general way, imbued in particular with a sense of their own superiority and racial kinship as well as Jewish inferiority and otherness, many of them undoubtedly were; explicitly prepared for the task of killing Jews they most certainly were not.

Along with ideological indoctrination, a vital factor touched upon but not fully explored in Milgram's experiments was conformity to the group. The battalion had orders to kill Jews, but each individual did not. Yet 80 to 90 percent of the men proceeded to kill, though almost all of them—at least initially—were horrified and disgusted by what they were doing. To break ranks and step out, to adopt overtly nonconformist behavior, was simply beyond most of the men. It was easier for them to shoot.

Why? First of all, by breaking ranks, nonshooters were leaving the "dirty work" to their comrades. Since the battalion had to shoot even if individuals did not, refusing to shoot constituted

refusing one's share of an unpleasant collective obligation. It was in effect an asocial act *vis-à-vis* one's comrades. Those who did not shoot risked isolation, rejection, and ostracism—a very uncomfortable prospect within the framework of a tight-knit unit stationed abroad among a hostile population, so that the individual had virtually nowhere else to turn for support and social contact.

This threat of isolation was intensified by the fact that stepping out could also have been seen as a form of moral reproach of one's comrades: the nonshooter was potentially indicating that he was "too good" to do such things. Most, though not all, nonshooters intuitively tried to diffuse the criticism of their comrades that was inherent in their actions. They pleaded not that they were "too good" but rather that they were "too weak" to kill.

Such a stance presented no challenge to the esteem of one's comrades; on the contrary, it legitimized and upheld "toughness" as a superior quality. For the anxious individual, it had the added advantage of posing no moral challenge to the murderous policies of the regime, though it did pose another problem, since the difference between being "weak" and being a "coward" was not great. Hence the distinction made by one policeman who did not dare to step out at Józefów for fear of being considered a coward, but who subsequently dropped out of his firing squad. It was one thing to be too cowardly even to try to kill; it was another, after resolutely trying to do one's share, to be too weak to continue.⁴⁸

Insidiously, therefore, most of those who did not shoot only reaffirmed the "macho" values of the majority—according to which it was a positive quality to be "tough" enough to kill unarmed, noncombatant men, women, and children—and tried not to rupture the bonds of comradeship that constituted their social world. Coping with the contradictions imposed by the demands of conscience on the one hand and the norms of the battalion on the other led to many tortured attempts at compromise: not shooting infants on the spot but taking them to the assembly point; not shooting on patrol if no "go-getter" was along

who might report such squeamishness; bringing Jews to the shooting site and firing but intentionally missing. Only the very exceptional remained indifferent to taunts of "weakling" from their comrades and could live with the fact that they were considered to be "no man."⁴⁹

Here we come full circle to the mutually intensifying effects of war and racism noted by John Dower, in conjunction with the insidious effects of constant propaganda and indoctrination. Pervasive racism and the resulting exclusion of the Jewish victims from any common ground with the perpetrators made it all the easier for the majority of the policemen to conform to the norms of their immediate community (the battalion) and their society at large (Nazi Germany). Here the years of anti-Semitic propaganda (and prior to the Nazi dictatorship, decades of shrill German nationalism) dovetailed with the polarizing effects of war. The dichotomy of racially superior Germans and racially inferior Jews, central to Nazi ideology, could easily merge with the image of a beleaguered Germany surrounded by warring enemies. If it is doubtful that most of the policemen understood or embraced the theoretical aspects of Nazi ideology as contained in SS indoctrination pamphlets, it is also doubtful that they were immune to "the influence of the times" (to use Lieutenant Drucker's phrase once again), to the incessant proclamation of German superiority and incitement of contempt and hatred for the Jewish enemy. Nothing helped the Nazis to wage a race war so much as the war itself. In wartime, when it was all too usual to exclude the enemy from the community of human obligation, it was also all too easy to subsume the Jews into the "image of the enemy," or *Feindbild*.

In his last book, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Primo Levi included an essay entitled "The Gray Zone," perhaps his most profound and deeply disturbing reflection on the Holocaust.⁵⁰ He maintained that in spite of our natural desire for clear-cut distinctions, the history of the camps "could not be reduced to the two blocs of victims and persecutors." He argued passionately, "It is naive, absurd, and historically false to believe that an

infernal system such as National Socialism sanctifies its victims; on the contrary, it degrades them, it makes them resemble itself." The time had come to examine the inhabitants of the "gray zone" between the simplified Manichean images of perpetrator and victim. Levi concentrated on the "gray zone of *protekcya* [corruption] and collaboration" that flourished in the camps among a spectrum of victims: from the "picturesque fauna" of low-ranking functionaries husbanding their minuscule advantages over other prisoners; through the truly privileged network of Kapos, who were free "to commit the worst atrocities" at whim; to the terrible fate of the Sonderkommandos, who prolonged their lives by manning the gas chambers and crematoria. (Conceiving and organizing the Sonderkommandos was in Levi's opinion National Socialism's "most demonic crime".)

While Levi focused on the spectrum of victim behavior within the gray zone, he dared to suggest that this zone encompassed perpetrators as well. Even the SS man Muhsfeld of the Birkenau crematoria—whose "daily ration of slaughter was studied with arbitrary and capricious acts, marked by his inventions of cruelty"—was not a "monolith." Faced with the miraculous survival of a sixteen-year-old girl discovered while the gas chambers were being cleared, the disconcerted Muhsfeld briefly hesitated. In the end he ordered the girl's death but quickly left before his orders were carried out. One "instant of pity" was not enough to "absolve" Muhsfeld, who was deservedly hanged in 1947. Yet it did "place him too, although at its extreme boundary, within the gray band, that zone of ambiguity which radiates out from regimes based on terror and obsequiousness."

Levi's notion of the gray zone encompassing both perpetrators and victims must be approached with a cautious qualification. The perpetrators and victims in the gray zone were not mirror images of one another. Perpetrators did not become fellow victims (as many of them later claimed to be) in the way some victims became accomplices of the perpetrators. The relationship between perpetrator and victim was not symmetrical. The range of choice each faced was totally different.

Nonetheless, the spectrum of Levi's gray zone seems quite applicable to Reserve Police Battalion 101. The battalion certainly had its quota of men who neared the "extreme boundary" of the gray zone. Lieutenant Gnade, who initially rushed his men back from Minsk to avoid being involved in killing but who later learned to enjoy it, leaps to mind. So do the many reserve policemen who were horrified in the woods outside Józefów but subsequently became casual volunteers for numerous firing squads and "Jew hunts." They, like Muhsfeld, seem to have experienced that brief "instant of pity" but cannot be absolved by it. At the other boundary of the gray zone, even Lieutenant Buchmann, the most conspicuous and outspoken critic of the battalion's murderous actions, faltered at least once. Absent his protector, Major Trapp, and facing orders from the local Security Police in Łuków, he too led his men to the killing fields shortly before his transfer back to Hamburg. And at the very center of the perpetrators' gray zone stood the pathetic figure of Trapp himself, who sent his men to slaughter Jews "weeping like a child," and the bedridden Captain Höffmann, whose body rebelled against the terrible deeds his mind willed.

The behavior of any human being is, of course, a very complex phenomenon, and the historian who attempts to "explain" it is indulging in a certain arrogance. When nearly 500 men are involved, to undertake any general explanation of their collective behavior is even more hazardous. What, then, is one to conclude? Most of all, one comes away from the story of Reserve Police Battalion 101 with great unease. This story of ordinary men is not the story of all men. The reserve policemen faced choices, and most of them committed terrible deeds. But those who killed cannot be absolved by the notion that anyone in the same situation would have done as they did. For even among them, some refused to kill and others stopped killing. Human responsibility is ultimately an individual matter.

At the same time, however, the collective behavior of Reserve Police Battalion 101 has deeply disturbing implications. There are many societies afflicted by traditions of racism and caught in

the siege mentality of war or threat of war. Everywhere society conditions people to respect and defer to authority, and indeed could scarcely function otherwise. Everywhere people seek career advancement. In every modern society, the complexity of life and the resulting bureaucratization and specialization attenuate the sense of personal responsibility of those implementing official policy. Within virtually every social collective, the peer group exerts tremendous pressures on behavior and sets moral norms. If the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers under such circumstances, what group of men cannot?

The Germans' use of the term "Jew-hunt" was not casual. It expressed the killers' conception of the nature of their activity and the attendant emotion. Theirs was the exterminatory pursuit of the remnants of a particularly pernicious species that needed to be destroyed in its entirety. Moreover, the word "*Jagd*" has a positive *Gefühlswert*, a positive emotive valence. Hunting is a pleasurable pursuit, rich in adventure, involving no danger to the hunter, and its reward is a record of animals slain—in the case of the men of this police battalion and other German "Jew-hunters," a record of Jews ferreted out and killed.

BASED ON THEIR activities and on the revelations contained in their own testimony, the men of Police Battalion 101 can be aptly described as members of a "genocidal cohort" (*Völkermordkohorte*), and it cannot be doubted that they conceived of themselves as such: "Our main task continued to consist, however, in the annihilation of the Jews."¹⁹ Their devotion to annihilating the Jews was such that they would even postpone operations against real partisans, against the people who posed a real military threat to them, in order to undertake search-and-destroy missions against the Jews.²⁰ The descriptions and analyses of their actions here suggest that these Germans viewed the genocidal killing, their primary activity in Poland, and themselves favorably. They repeatedly showed initiative in killing and did not shirk their assigned tasks, though they could have without punishment. They gave priority to the killing of Jews and even acted with cruel abandon. Their dedication to the genocidal slaughter was such that they persisted in it despite the gruesomeness which, though conveyed here at times graphically and in some detail, is difficult, perhaps impossible, to imagine and comprehend for anyone who has not been a party to similar scenes. Much of the killing was also personalized, in that the men often faced their victims one on one. Frequently, they were facing children.

Hitlers Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans
And The Holocaust. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen.
 Vintage Books. New York 1997.

8

POLICE BATTALION 101: ASSESSING THE MEN'S MOTIVES

HOW SHOULD WE understand the Germans in Police Battalion 101, whose deeds encompass not only the killings and deportations but also the manner in which the men conducted them? On the face of it, these Germans' actions appear to have been incompatible with a principled disapproval of the genocidal slaughter of Jews. Actions sometimes do express their own motivation, at least approximately. Still, the perpetrators' understanding of their actions, and the motivations for their actions, becomes still clearer when certain specific issues and their lives in Poland are investigated in greater depth.

Casting a comparative glance at the other national group whose members Police Battalion 101 slaughtered is instructive. In addition to having been assigned an important role in the extermination of Polish Jewry, the men of Police Battalion 101 were charged with "pacifying" their region. As a consequence, they sometimes massacred Poles. Partisans were active, even if not nearly as troublesome at this time as some have claimed, and they inflicted damage on German forces and installations, eventually on Police Battalion 101 itself. In Poland, as elsewhere, the Germans practiced draconian occupation policies. Casualties suffered by Germans were multiplied fifty- or one-hundred-fold when the Germans revenged themselves on innocent Polish civilians.

On September 25, 1942, a detachment of Third Company was ambushed in Talcyn during an operation to trap two resistance fighters. One of the Ger-

mans, a sergeant, was killed. Even though Police Battalion 101 was already complicit in the killing of around twenty thousand Jews, this may have been the first casualty suffered by its men during the three months that they had then completed in Poland, which may shed some light on their staggeringly violent reaction to it. Major Trapp submitted a report of over two and a half single-space pages, recounting in great detail the events preceding, during, and following the ambush—all because of the death of one sergeant in an occupied, hostile territory. More significantly, the Germans exacted retribution for what Trapp—in an unwitting testament to selective compassion and to a stunning lack of self-reflectiveness—called in his report the “cowardly murderer” (*feige Mörder*). Four platoons, led by Trapp himself, first combed the area around Talcyn for partisans, without success. They had been instructed to take two hundred lives in retribution for the German’s death. So they assembled the three hundred Polish inhabitants of the village, choosing, however, only seventy-eight (there may have been some women and children among them), and shot them at the cemetery.¹ What was Trapp’s attitude towards the killing of Poles? One of his men was struck by it: “I can still recall very vividly that our battalion commander was very shaken after this action. He even wept. He was what one would call a fine human being and I deem it impossible that it was he who had ordered the shooting of the hostages.” Trapp—who years later, despite having led his men in mass murder, is remarkably pronounced “a fine human being”—was not content to inflict the full toll of two hundred deaths on the village where his man had been ambushed and killed, a village which he himself reported was “known for a long time as a notorious nest of [bandit] accomplices.”² So the men of Police Battalion 101 traveled five miles to where they could lay their hands on some Jews in Kock’s Jewish quarter. They proceeded to slaughter 180 Jews “as a further retributive measure.”³ This man does not say that Trapp became unsettled and agitated after they killed the Jews.

This illustrative episode juxtaposes the Germans’ attitudes towards Poles and Jews. They did indeed kill the Poles, according to a punitive military rationale that was, if normal for German occupation forces, a crime against the victims. Yet they chose to spare an additional 122 Poles whom they ought to have killed according to their orders. Trapp, who had in the last two and one half months led his men on killing operations claiming about twenty thousand Jewish lives, was “shaken” at having killed fewer than one hundred Poles! He cried. And it was not just Trapp who was disturbed by the killing of Poles. Some of the men expressed afterwards their desire not to undertake any more missions of this sort.⁴ Trapp also, in an act of solicitude never shown towards Jewish victims, sent one of his men to calm the women, holed up in a schoolroom, whose husbands the Germans were shooting.⁵ The Ger-

mans acted that day as if some Nazi rule of thumb guided them, namely that no mass slaughter should be visited on a population without available Jews falling lifeless as well—in this case, by a better than two-to-one ratio to the Poles. The men of Police Battalion 101 went to a city that was not proximate to the scene of the crime, where they slaked their Jewish blood-lust by killing Jews, and by killing a significantly greater number of them than their quota even required. Trapp, moved to tears by the killing of Poles, turned around and *initiated* the killing of Jews, Jews whose relationship to the offending act was non-existent, except in the Nazified German mind, in which the Jews were considered to be a metaphysical enemy.⁷

After this “retributive killing,” Police Battalion 101 participated in a large-scale retributive slaughter of Poles, following the killing in Biala Podlaska of a Nazi Party official. Police Battalion 101 was ordered into action together with Wehrmacht units and eastern European SS auxiliary troops. Trapp tried to keep his men out of the thick of things, succeeding in having them do no more than comb the woods, leaving the killing and the burning of the villages to the *Hiwis*.⁸

When compared to the obvious distaste and reluctance shown by Police Battalion 101 in its comparatively small-scale revenge killings of Poles, the men’s zealous and dedicated slaughtering of Jews stands in sharp relief. The killing of Poles was a regrettable necessity. Towards Jews all inhibitions had fallen from them. Yet the men’s comparative gusto in killing Jews is not all that distinguishes it. Their willingness to be seen by others, including loved ones, as genocidal executioners also reveals their approval of the deeds. Among others, at least two of the officers, Lieutenant Paul Brand and Captain Wohlauf, the commander of First Company, had their wives by their sides while they were killing in Poland. Wohlauf had earlier returned to Hamburg shortly after Police Battalion 101 arrived in Poland, in order to go through with an already scheduled wedding, which took place on June 29, 1942. He then caught up with his comrades, while his wife delayed a bit, joining him and the battalion shortly after their first major killing in Józefów. She stayed with the battalion for at least several weeks and several killing operations, and participated in one, if not two, of the large ones.⁹

Wohlauf’s wife attended the day-long killing operation that the entire battalion conducted at Międzyrzec on August 25. The roundup, the driving of the Jews from their homes to the market square, was perhaps the most brutal and licentious of all those that Police Battalion 101 conducted. The men left hundreds of dead Jews strewn about the streets. The scene at the market square was also among the most gruesome. Some of the notable features included the Germans forcing the Jews to squat for hours in the burning sun so that many fainted, and shooting any Jew who did nothing more than stand up.

The market square became littered with the dead.¹⁰ Such shootings naturally included many children, who found it particularly difficult to remain immobile in such discomfort for hours on end. The Hitwis and some of the Germans in the Międzyrzec's German *Gendarmerie* also used the occasion to satisfy their lust for cruelty. They entertained themselves by flogging Jews with whips.¹¹ Not only was Frau Wohlauf a party to all of this, but so were the wives of some of the locally stationed Germans, as well as a group of German Red Cross nurses.¹² Frau Wohlauf, if conforming to her usual practice, probably carried that symbol of domination, a riding whip, with her.¹³ That day, she and the other German women got to observe firsthand how their men were purging the world of the putative Jewish menace, by killing around one thousand and deporting ten thousand more to their deaths. This is how the pregnant Frau Wohlauf spent her honeymoon.

If Wohlauf and the other officers did not care that their labors were observed by his wife, by other German women, even by Red Cross nurses, many of the men of Police Battalion 101 thought that at least the presence of Frau Wohlauf was inappropriate. One man tells of his reaction: "On the day of the 'action,' I myself saw Frau Wohlauf dressed in normal clothes on the market place of Międzyrzec. Not just once, but frequently over a long period of time. I too was astonished at the behavior of our Company Commander and his spouse, and it made me angry all the more so, since our Company Commander knew full well before an 'action' what was going to happen."¹⁴ Another man tells of the general reaction in the battalion: "Moreover, my comrades told me of their anger that the wife of our Company Commander watched the evacuation, although she was pregnant."¹⁵ Their objections bespeak no shame at what they were doing, no desire to conceal from others their contribution to mass annihilation and torture, but rather a sense of chivalry and propriety that Frau Wohlauf's presence violated, particularly since this ghetto clearing was, even by their standards, unusually brutal and gruesome.¹⁶ That it was this woman in particular who was not supposed to see such things is clear because they did not object to the presence of other women, including Lieutenant Brand's wife, who at one point apparently also observed them in action. Although they may have generally believed that women should not be exposed to such horrors, it was this woman, because she was pregnant, whose presence aroused them. The emphasis on her pregnancy makes it clear that the men were agitated because of possible damage to her sensibilities and person. Living with the battalion, Frau Wohlauf already knew of their genocidal killing; by having been in Międzyrzec she was acquiring no fundamentally new knowledge, except perhaps of the details of such an operation. That it was her "condition" and her welfare that was the cause of the men's agitation is testified to by the wife of Lieutenant Brand: "I remember exactly that a



Vera Wohlauf and
Captain Julius Wohlauf



short while later Major Trapp denounced this incident publicly and declared something to the effect that he thought it outrageous that women who are in a state of pregnancy should witness such a thing.¹⁷ Trapp chose to inform the women of his anger while many of his men were in attendance. Frau Brand explains: "By public denunciation I mean that Major Trapp delivered his statements before a rather large gathering of officers and NCOs, and in the presence of various wives who were staying with their husbands as visitors, including also me."¹⁷ The men of Police Battalion 101 voiced no general objection to having had Frau Wohlauf, Frau Brand, and other women living with their battalion in Poland, fully knowledgeable of their genocidal killing of Jews that was, as two of the men put it, their "daily bread."¹⁸ Indeed, Trapp was comfortable enough with what they were doing that he was willing to discuss it openly with the women in front of many of his men. He merely wanted to make it clear that their killing operations were scenes to which the women, especially the pregnant Frau Wohlauf, would not be directly exposed any further. Their killing operations were, after all, usually violent and gruesome.

More generally, beyond Police Battalion 101, the perpetrators who operated in Poland and elsewhere also voiced no objection to having their deeds known to those beyond their immediate genocidal cohort, including to women and to loved ones. German women—the perpetrators' wives and girlfriends, as well as secretaries, nurses, employees of economic enterprises, and entertainers—were everywhere in Poland, which meant that they learned of the genocidal slaughter; the Germans' extermination of Polish Jewry, comprising around 10 percent of the entire Polish population, was, after all, common knowledge. The German security police's own reports on the mood of the people in the Lublin District tell again and again that the Germans' and Poles' knowledge of the mass extermination of the Jews was extensive. According to one member of the security police, the fate of the Jews was discussed in all German offices, including in post offices and on trains. That the Germans were gassing the Jews was, according to him, an open secret.¹⁹ Another German who had been stationed in Lublin admits in a memorable phrase how open and widespread discussion of the systematic slaughter of Jews had been: "The sparrows sang about it from the roofs."²⁰ Lieutenant Brand's wife—in recounting an incident in which one German was brazen about his lust for Jewish blood—also indicates the temper of the free and unconcealed discussion about the genocidal enterprise:

I was sitting one morning at breakfast with my husband in the garden of his lodgings when an ordinary policeman of his platoon came up to us, snapped to attention, and declared: "Lieutenant, I have not yet had breakfast." When my husband looked at him quizzically, he declared further: "I have not yet bumped off any Jews." The whole thing sounded so cynical that I indignantly reprimanded the man in harsh words and also called him, I believe, a scoundrel [*Lumpen*]. My husband sent the policeman away and, to boot, then reproached me, explaining that by my statements I would bring great trouble down onto my head.²¹

For the perpetrators in general and the men of Police Battalion 101 in particular, it was fine for women to possess knowledge of their genocidal operations. Otherwise, the Germans would not have allowed so many women, if only as witnesses, to have been a party to the brutal persecution and killing of Jews. But, for some, the direct exposure of women to the gruesomeness, to the visual horrors, of the campaign of extermination was deemed to be improper. Like soldiers from many eras, who would have become incensed had women been allowed beside them in battle, the men of Police Battalion 101 thought it a job fit only for men, or at least not for pregnant women. They, like soldiers, could at once have objected to the presence of women, without being ashamed of their own activities as warriors in the service of their nation.

The Germans' openness about their genocidal slaughtering—making it available to the view of so many other German men and women who happened to be stationed in Poland—is but an indication of the perpetrators' obvious approval of their historic deeds. Yet nothing betrays the falseness of their routine postwar denials of their approval of, indeed their pride in, the killings, more than the photographs that the Germans in Police Battalion 101 took memorializing their time in Poland, of which only some unknown percentage has come to light. These Germans' willingness to make an extensive photographic record of their deeds, including their killing operations, in which they appear with cheerful and proud demeanors as men entirely comfortable with their environment, their vocation, and with the images that are being preserved, is compelling evidence that they did not conceive of themselves as having been engaged in crime, let alone in one of the greatest crimes of the century. The following photograph illustrates to us, as it celebrated for the Germans, their active disregard for the dignity of Jews, their denial that Jews possessed dignity. It is an example of the Germans' use of the socially dead Jews as playthings for their own satisfaction.²²



A man from Police Battalion 101 amuses himself and the hearing German onlookers with their Jewish playthings.

Photographic evidence, as the cliché tells us, often conveys more than do many words of testimony. Yet few words can intensify the communicative

power of the visual evidence of a photograph as do those that this preening German penned on the reverse side of this revealing image. "He should work, but he must be clean-shaven" (*Arbeiten soll er, aber Rasirt [sic] muss er sein*). The German was not merely recording the event but giving his ironic commentary on it.³³ Degrading Jews in this manner, namely by cutting off their beards, was a common practice among Germans of the time. It was doubly symbolic. It represented the absolute mastery of the photographed German over the Jew. The Jew, a grown man, had no choice but to stand by as another abridged his sovereignty over his own body by cutting away his beard, a symbol of his manhood. The personal desecration was done, moreover, in front of the camera's recording eye, ensuring that the victim's shame would be displayed to people for years to come. This simple act conveyed unequivocally—to the German, to the Jew, and to all who watched, contemporaneously or later—the virtually limitless power of the shearer over his victim. The act, and its enjoyment by others, bespeaks a mind-set found among "masters" dealing with the socially dead, particularly during those moments when they mark them physically in order to convey to them that they possess no honor.³⁴ What better way for a man to display to his children and grandchildren his heroics during the war for the German *Volks*' survival than to have such a testament? The second symbolic aspect of the deed was the choice of the beard, which was not haphazard. Just as Gnade selected bearded, old Jewish men to beat at the killing of Łomazy, just as the Police Battalion 309 men in Białystok set the beards of Jews on fire, and just as Germans frequently and spontaneously cut Jews' beards during the Holocaust, so too did this man create a record of his separating this Jew from the luxuriant growth that Germans identified with Jewry.

The photographs that the Germans in Police Battalion 101 made as keepsakes of their work in Poland were generously shared among the entire battalion. They were not private mementos, furtively taken, guarded, and hoarded by individuals. The affirmative atmosphere that reigned within the battalion regarding their work took on an almost celebratory, festive quality in the public displaying and sharing of the photographs. "I would like to remark on these photographs. They were laid out hanging on the wall and anyone, as he pleased, could order copies of them. I too acquired these photographs through such an order, even though I had not always participated in the events that the photographs depict. If my memory serves me right, most of the photographs had been taken by a member of the company's office."³⁵ It is as if they were saying: "Here is a great event. Anyone who wants to preserve for himself images of the heroic accomplishments can order copies." It is reminiscent of travelers purchasing postcards or asking for duplicates of friends' snapshots that have captured favorite vistas and scenes from an enjoyable and memorable trip.

The photographs serve as two kinds of evidence. Not only did the men want to adorn their photo albums with images from their genocidal operations. The images themselves are also revealing. Photographs taken in Łomazy and elsewhere remind us to question the prevailing views that hold these Germans to have been frightened, coerced, unwilling, disapproving, or horrified killers of people whom they considered to be innocent. Indeed, some of the photos capture men who look tranquil and happy, and others show them in poses of pride and joy as they undertake their dealings with their Jewish victims. It is difficult to see in the photographs men who viewed the killing to be a crime. Yet, as eloquent as they are, the photographs described and reproduced to this point seem almost mute compared to two others. The first one was taken in Radzyń, likely sometime between late August and October 1942. From a period when the battalion was carrying out several of its large mass killings and brutal deportations, it memorializes a group of officers from the battalion staff and First Company sitting outdoors around a long table with the wives of two of the officers, Frau Brand and Frau Wohlauf. They are drinking in what appears to be a convivial atmosphere. Frau Wohlauf, who can be seen displaying a big smile, is evidently having a good time.

A second photograph, from Czermierniki sometime during the second half of 1942, is truly festive. It captures more than fifteen men of Lieutenant Oscar Peters' Third Company platoon celebrating. The Germans are holding drinks, grinning broadly, and appear to be singing to the accompaniment of violin playing. Hanging on the wall behind them is a hand-lettered ditty which they obviously composed themselves:

*The matchword for today
Now the light-stepped sun begins
And all feels well.*

*(Parole für Heute
Jetzt gehts los im Trapp
Und alles fühlt sich Wohlauf.)*

Punning on their leaders' names (Trapp means "clip-clop" and Wohlauf, the name of First Company's commander, means "well" or "in good health"), the men described their state of mind. These Germans were celebrating, not cursing, the names of the men who repeatedly sent them to kill Jews. These men—whose lives were then dedicated to mass slaughter, who, in addition to the large company- and battalion-strength killings taking place during this period, were conducting numerous search-and-destroy missions in their own area—were feeling great.³⁶

The perpetrators' places of congregation not only housed photographs but were also filled with conversation of the mass slaughter. The men of Police Battalion 101 reveal little of their own contemporary intimate conversations of their deeds. A side glance at their brethren in Police Regiment 25, who were engaged in the same enterprise and perpetrated their mass slaughters in a manner indistinguishable from that of Police Battalion 101, is suggestive on this point. Its officers talked frequently and approvingly of the genocidal slaughter: "... I know that the Company Commander, as well as the other officers of Police Regiment 25, which was then stationed in Lublin, spoke in the officers' club of the killings that had been executed. . . . the younger officers spoke very much of these things. They deemed themselves to be at war in Poland and to have accomplished feats of heroism by these killings."¹⁷ These Germans were so in the grip of antisemitic fantasies that they conceived of the manifestly inert, unarmed Jewish population of the Lublin region, which was destitute, prostrate, and compliant in the face of German demands, as being at war with Germany. In slaughtering Jews, the ideological warriors believed themselves to be performing heroic deeds. The postwar testimony refers not to the men of Police Battalion 101 specifically, but to the officers of the regiment to which it and Police Battalion 65 belonged. Nevertheless, it conveys the atmosphere of approval that permeated this police regiment and its battalions. As this man, who was the commander of the Order Police in Lublin from July 1940 to July 1944, put it, the officers "always discussed the shootings and were also pretty proud of them."¹⁸

It cannot be doubted that the men of Police Battalion 101 discussed their wholesale slaughtering among themselves. The clerk of First Company recounts, for example, how the men, upon returning from killing operations, regularly filled him in on their handiwork in detail.¹⁹ Many have testified that they complained vociferously to each other of Frau Wohlauf's presence at the killing in Międzyrzec, which is an instance of such discussion, of moral evaluation, and of the expression of severe criticism of their superiors.²⁰ While the men's postwar testimony does not announce explicitly that they had generally approved of the genocide and its attendant cruelties (this is not surprising, since such announcements could have put them in legal jeopardy), its thousands of pages also do not warrant the conclusion that these men disapproved of it in principle. On the contrary, the men's accounts of the conversions that they had while in the killing fields suggest the opposite, namely that these men in principle approved of the genocide and of their own deeds.²¹ One of the men, for example, reports of the good spirits and jocularity that reigned during a meal after one killing operation: "At lunch a few of my comrades made merry [*machten lustig*] over the experiences that they had had during the operation. From their stories, I could gather that they had

been involved in a shooting operation. So I remember as a particularly crass case that one of the men remarked with aplomb that now we eat 'Jew-brains.' This remark was so disgusting to me that I reprimanded the man, who then indeed stopped. The other comrades who had laughed at this, to me, 'gruesome joke' also stopped."²² The testimony of one former member of Police Battalion 101's Second Company makes clear that such talk was common, that the men did indeed routinely discuss the killings and the brutalities: "Evenings, in quarters, stories were often told of the terrible abuses against Jews, by which First Company was supposed to have especially distinguished itself. In that company there was 'Big Raeder,' who was referred to as 'Sluggier' [*Schlüger*] and who treated Jews and Poles very ruthlessly."²³

The question, of course, is in what tone and with what emotions did the speakers and listeners contemplate the tales. The evidence suggests that these regular public tellings were occasions to swap stories for entertainment, in the spirit of general approval. Even if First Company was prominent in cruelty, its men are presented here as but having "distinguished" themselves in an activity that engaged the others as well. This would mean that some of Second Company's perpetrators of such "excesses" were themselves likely to gather around and share in their own accomplishments as well as in those of others. Furthermore, the men of Second Company must themselves have perpetrated many of the deeds under discussion, for the three companies were typically stationed apart from one another, so each company had to rely primarily on its own activities for conversational material. Obviously, many of the men of Police Battalion 101 were committing many brutalities. If a spirit of approval had not animated such evening discussions, if some of the men had indeed responded to the stories by indicating their principled opposition to the brutalizing and killing of Jews, then they undoubtedly would have said so after the war. The men's silence on this point is almost as revealing as self-indicting admissions would be.²⁴

What do the men of Police Battalion 101 say of their attitudes towards the genocidal slaughter? The lieutenant, Buchmann, who did refuse to kill explains what led him to demur when his fellow officers did not. "I was then a little older and, moreover, a reserve officer. I was not intent on being promoted or otherwise to advance, because I had at home my prosperous business. The Company Commanders, Wohlauf and Hoffmann, by contrast, were young people on active duty who aspired to become somebody. Through my business experience, which especially extended also abroad, I had a better comprehension of things. Moreover, I already knew from before, through my business activity, many Jews."²⁵ Although the lieutenant speaks of the importance of the other officers' career ambitions, he—despite his stated heartfelt intention not to incriminate others²⁶—unwittingly betrays their operative motivation and the crucial differ-

ence between him and them when he gives this brief account of why he viewed the killings differently from the others. His "better comprehension of these matters" consisted of his recognition that they were committing crimes. The basis for his view, which he implies was exceptional for the times, was his different experience abroad and with Jews. Simply put, he viewed Jews differently. With this comparison, he acknowledges by implication that his fellow officers were beholden to the regnant German antisemitism that was the basis for and had engendered the policy of total extermination.

The lieutenant's depiction of himself as having been fundamentally different in attitude towards the mass slaughter is confirmed by others in the battalion. The reservist who served as the clerk of First Company portrays this lieutenant as the exception in his company, saying that neither he nor his comrades had the sense that the officers, particularly their commander, Wohlauf, killed Jews unwillingly. While the lieutenant was objecting to the killings and complaining about them openly and frequently, the other officers evinced no sympathy with his views, though they tolerated and accepted his inaction.³⁷ One time, when the lieutenant found himself under the command of Trapp, but of the security police in Luków, he apparently felt pressured enough, his opposition to the killing notwithstanding, to lead his men in a killing operation, in which they marched Jews to a killing site and shot them.³⁸ But, fortunately for him, these circumstances were extraordinary for Police Battalion 101. Under the indulgent Trapp, he and the others were not pressured to kill. Lieutenant Buchmann did not kill because pressure was not applied; the others killed anyway, because pressure was unnecessary.

Two of the most significant and revealing actions of the men of Police Battalion 101 are, on the one hand, the men's incessant volunteering to kill and, on the other, the failure of the men to avail themselves of the opportunities to avoid killing. One of the Germans in Second Company states the simple truth: "It is also perfectly possible that one could keep away from the executions if one wanted to."³⁹ This was, moreover, not just a presumption on their part. Lieutenant Buchmann explains: "I can remember that from time to time before operations it was asked whether anyone did not feel up to the impending task. If anyone answered affirmatively . . . he was entrusted with other tasks."⁴⁰ When discussing the Józefów slaughter, Erwin Grafmann, a member of Second Company, states: "In any case, as matters stood, one could either volunteer or avail oneself of the opportunity to abstain from participation if one did not feel up to the task."⁴¹ The disinclination to kill that the Germans did have and occasionally acted upon was a visceral, and not an ethical, one. The reason that some would and did opt out of the killing was because the duty was at times unpleasant. Not everyone always "felt up to it." As such, the decision to kill or not to kill was a matter of taste and not of principle.

The testimony of another killer inadvertently confirms that neither he nor the others considered a comrade's acceptance of the option not to kill as an ideological or ethical rejection of the genocidal enterprise. "When the question is put to me why did I at all participate in the shooting, I must say that one does not want to be considered a coward."⁴² He is saying here that it was the threat of being considered a coward that might have inhibited some men from excusing themselves from the killing. This can only mean that an essentially unquestioned consensus on the justice of the extermination existed. For conceiving of someone as a coward, as a psychological weakening with an inferior constitution, presupposes agreement by everyone that the deed being asked of the actor meets his own as well as general approval. And so, right before their initial killing in Józefów, Gnade's final words during his address to his company, according to the testimony of one of his men, was an admonition to the effect of "Do not therefore go soft."⁴³ A person can be a coward, he can fail to act owing to being "soft," only because he is not courageous enough or not made of sufficient mettle to carry out a task that he wants to see accomplished. If a person is not in favor of the deed, then the failure to carry it out is an indication of his opposition to it, not of cowardice or weakness.⁴⁴ Pacifists—those who as a matter of principle oppose war—are not cowards. It is noteworthy that the men of Police Battalion 101 do not say that those who chose to avoid killing ran the risk of being seen as "Jew-lovers" (*Judenbegünstiger*), namely as principled opponents of the deed. This serious possibility evidently did not occur to the individuals, either at the time or after the war. And it certainly would have if solidarity with the Jews had indeed existed and been an operative motivation within the battalion, or if it had been even remotely possible that the men of Police Battalion 101 suspected that principled opposition to the killing was the source of a person's disinclination to kill Jews. The tenor within the battalion was such that, in the men's testimony, the charge of being "Jew-lovers" is not discussed.

It is also revealing that the "pep talk" given to Police Battalion 101 before the Józefów massacre was, as has been noted, a transparently thin justification for the huge slaughter of civilian Jews. The justification—namely that German women and children dying in air raids should motivate the annihilation of destitute Polish Jewish communities *in toto*, prostrate, unarmed communities in a defeated country hundreds of miles away—would not have made sense, would have sounded and been received like the "logic" of a madman to anyone who did not share the Nazi eliminationist antisemitic creed, of which an article of faith was that the Jews' demonic capacities reached far, with powerful destructive effects. The reminder of the civilian losses at home was meant to activate Germans' culturally shared cognitive model of Jewry, and thereby merely to remind the men of what Jews by nature were—and not to

win dissenters over to a conception of Jewry that they did not already share. The notion that the justification made sense to the men of Police Battalion 101 finds further substantiation in their silence about it. Not one of them has testified that he thought it was crazy, that he did not at the time see some causal relationship between the deaths of Germans and the need to kill Jews, some organic connection between the bombing and the genocide.

The rule for search-and-destroy missions and for forming the shooting commando for the large-scale killing operations was odd for a security organization of this sort and is therefore significant. It was to staff them with volunteers. The officers knew that this was unpleasant duty, and so it made sense to let each man decide for himself if he felt up to it. The officers could do so for two reasons. The first was that they understood that any reluctance to participate in executions was a reaction to the real gruesomeness of such killings and not the result of any moral opposition to them. The officers were being solicitous of their men. No evidence exists to suggest that in Police Battalion 101 a man's desire to forgo a killing operation was perceived as a challenge to the German moral order, or as a principled repudiation of the regime or of this, one of its most important projects. Had it been so, then the officers would likely have been less willing to countenance their men's selectivity in deciding to take part in what was their principal activity while stationed in Poland.

The second reason that the officers could rely upon volunteers was that letting the men decide for themselves who would kill posed no difficulty for getting the job done. "It is, moreover, true," testifies one man from Second Company, "that there were always enough volunteers for the executions. I too volunteered once or twice for executions, specifically for small-scale operations of the platoon."⁴⁵ A number of his comrades confirm the voluntarism that pervaded their ranks. One relates: "I must first and foremost state categorically that whenever the superior requested them, there were enough volunteers for execution squads. This was the case also in Józefów. I must add that, in fact, so many volunteered that some had to be left behind."⁴⁶ The first of these two men, Grafmann, is one of the small number of men who, in the midst of the killing operation of Józefów, asked to be excused because of their disgust at the gruesomeness of the face-to-face killing during this, their baptismal genocidal operation. Obviously, as Grafmann's own testimony indicates and his later volunteering to be an executioner demonstrates, Grafmann's request was not born of a moral antipathy to the slaughtering of Jews.⁴⁷ Grafmann may have been a paradigmatic killer of the type who had difficulty at first because of the gruesomeness, yet who freely chose to resume killing even after having been excused. Volunteering for killing, as in many police battalions, was the battalion norm.⁴⁸

THE OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN to the men to avoid killing have already been touched upon. In addition to the men who chose not to kill, the recalcitrant lieutenant served as a powerful example to the entire battalion that the men could refuse to kill without suffering tangible hardships. Furthermore, from the battalion commander down to its non-commissioned officers, those in command positions showed understanding for the disinclination that their subordinates might have had in performing their unsavory tasks. As one of the men puts it when discussing Trapp's initial offer, "it did not take special courage for someone to step forward."⁴⁹ But let us imagine that despite the opportunities to avoid killing, despite the possibilities that existed not to volunteer to shoot Jews, some of the men were hesitant to declare their disinclination to kill, either by asking to be excused from killing or by repeatedly and perhaps conspicuously failing to volunteer for killing operations. Let us imagine that they were of such weak will that, although they perceived the genocide to be a monumental crime, they nevertheless preferred to be genocidal executioners, to witness and produce the gruesome scenes that were the roundups and the executions. They still could have done what the disapproving lieutenant did: apply for a transfer. The lieutenant wrote to the police president of Hamburg stating his opposition to the killing and asking to be returned to Hamburg for duty there. His request was granted.⁵⁰ Indeed, his refusal was not held against him. He was subsequently promoted to a higher rank and installed in the trusted position of adjutant to the Police President of Hamburg.⁵¹

As generally is the case in military and police institutions, procedures did exist within the Order Police for men to request transfers. Men of the Order Police did avail themselves of the transfer mechanism. In February 1940, for example, two men of Police Battalion 102, also a Hamburg battalion, submitted requests to be transferred to their home garrisons that were approved. The father of one had died, leaving his elderly mother alone to manage their two-and-a-half-acre property. The serious heart condition of the second man's wife was deemed an acceptable reason. In August of that year, another man was granted his request to be transferred from the battalion, because of a troublesome leg that swelled and pained him on long marches.⁵² General transfer procedures did exist within the Order Police. Men took advantage of them, and the institution appears to have been, if anything, rather liberal in granting them. Furthermore, when assessing the men's opportunities to remove themselves from killing operations, the transfer offers made to the men must also be taken into account. One that has survived in documentary form was a request which was submitted to all three battalions of Police Regiment

25 and to Police Battalion 53 for young, active policemen from the communications platoons to volunteer for training for a "communications replacement company" in Cracow. The request came in December 1942, when all the units were already steeped in mass slaughter. Two men of Police Battalion 101 did apply and were transferred.⁵³ Why did all the qualified men in these battalions not apply? Aside from these two men, no evidence exists that any of the men of Police Battalion 101 applied for transfers, either on their own or in response to officially posted transfer opportunities, during the period of their genocidal killings. Despite all of their easy protestations that they did not look favorably on the killing, that they would have liked to have avoided killing but could not, virtually none of the men of Police Battalion 101 has even *claimed* that he put in for a transfer.⁵⁴

Another facet of these men's lives needs to be considered. During their time as genocidal killers, the men of Police Battalion 101 went home on furloughs, lasting weeks.⁵⁵ Some of the men say that they were instructed not to discuss their genocidal activities; others deny that they received any such injunction. Lieutenant Kurt Drucker, for example, admits that he, "on the occasion of a furlough, spoke with friends about the events."⁵⁶ Whatever their instructions were (and they might have varied from company to company), the battalion members have been practically mute regarding what they did or talked about while at home with friends and loved ones. Had the perpetrators believed the genocidal slaughter to be a crime, had they therefore seen while at home the prospect of returning to the brutalities and blood of the killings as being as uninviting a prospect as a principled opponent of them would have beheld them to be, then how could they bear to bring themselves to return to Poland? Once back home in Hamburg or Bremen, how could opponents of the killings not have cringed with horror at returning to the gruesomeness of the mass murdering? The point is not that they could have been expected to desert (although it is noteworthy that no evidence exists of any who did), with all the real dangers that desertion entailed. It is that the respite from genocidal operations ought to have given opponents of it, namely those who actually considered it to be mass *murder* (and not justified extermination), the opportunity and time to reflect even more on their situation and options. They were in the bosom of their families, away from whatever social psychological pressures living in an institution of genocidal slaughter created for individuals. And they knew the horrors that awaited their return to Poland. So why did they not resolve to apply for a transfer? Why did they not appeal to whatever resources they had at home—family, friends, or acquaintances who might have had contacts or themselves have been in government agencies—to help them escape their horrible assignment? Had the men of Police Battalion 101 made any effort to extricate them-

selves from the genocidal killing, then they would have asserted as much after the war. They reflexively say that they wish they had not had to kill—hardly convincing testimony from those who are being interrogated for their mass murdering. Yet, despite their powerful desire to exculpate themselves, only one man in the entire battalion, aside from Lieutenant Buchmann, tells of having done precisely what would be expected of opponents of mass murder, namely attempt to extricate themselves from the killing institution. This man got his wife to write to the Hamburg police authorities that she was unable to raise their (at the time) eight children without his assistance. His transfer back to Hamburg followed a few months later.⁵⁷ The rest of the battalion's men do not claim, let alone corroborate the claim, that while on furlough they either expressed to friends and family a wish to extricate themselves from the killing, or actually attempted to liberate themselves from the job of mass murdering, which further reinforces the notion that they did not disapprove of the genocidal slaughter.

The German culture of cruelty that existed towards Jews cannot be documented for this battalion to the extent that it can for many other institutions of killing. Few survivors have emerged, and so it is often up to the Germans to report their own brutality—however much there was—and thereby to incriminate themselves, which they are naturally reluctant to do. Moreover, the Federal Republic of Germany's investigating authorities were generally not interested in learning about instances of cruelty, since by the time of these investigations, all crimes, except murder, had passed the time limit for prosecution that is specified in the statute of limitations. No matter how much a German in a police battalion had beaten, tortured, or maimed a Jew, if he did not kill his victim, then he could not be prosecuted for his actions. Still, enough evidence has emerged to suggest that the culture of cruelty was also part of Police Battalion 101's constitution.

These Germans expended no effort to spare the victims any unnecessary suffering. Moreover, the evidence does not suggest that they gave any thought to the matter. The entire course of the destruction of a Jewish community—from the brutality of the roundups, to the suffering inflicted upon the Jews at the assembly points (by forcing them to sit, crouch, or lie motionless for hours on end in the midsummer heat without water), to the manner of execution, in Łomazy, for example—bespeaks a tolerance, if not a willful administration of suffering upon the victims. The roundups did not have to be such licentious affairs. The Germans did not have to instill terror in the victims and leave scores, sometimes hundreds of dead in the streets. When the Jews were waiting for the Germans to march them to the city's outskirts or to load them onto freight cars, it would have been easy for the Germans to distribute some water to them, and to let them move around a bit, rather than to shoot any

who stood up. As a number of the battalion members have testified, it was evident to the Germans that the Jews suffered greatly and needlessly as they waited. Finally, the cruelty of the Germans' manner of shooting Jews or of using clubs and whips to drive them from their houses or into the freight cars speaks for itself. Because such brutality and cruelty became integral to the practice of ghetto clearings and annihilations, and also because the goal itself of mass extermination is so horrific and tends to overwhelm the consideration of "lesser" crimes, when compiling the ledger of German brutality and cruelty—in the endeavor to assess the actions and attitudes of the killers—it is easy to overlook these practices, as cruel as they were. Why did they not have "orderly" killing operations, without the public killing of children, the beatings, without the symbolic degradation?

In addition to the willfully and unnecessarily brutal manner in which the Germans and their helpers conducted the various stages of a ghetto annihilation—namely the routinized roundup and execution procedures—they also gratuitously brutalized and tortured the Jews. Sometimes the agents inflicting suffering on the Jews were the Germans' eastern European Hiwis, such as during one of the Międzyrzec deportations, when the Hiwis, obviously influenced by the Germans' own brutality, lashed Jews with whips. Any brutality that the Hiwis publicly perpetrated upon the Jews was permitted, if not promoted, by the Germans, who had absolute control over them, and such brutality should be taken into account when evaluating the Germans' treatment of the Jews. The scene at the marketplace during the last large deportation from Międzyrzec is such an instance. The Germans forced the Jews to sit or squat huddled together. The following photograph depicts a similar scene from another of these Germans' deportations from Międzyrzec.

The Jews were praying and crying, and therefore making much noise. This disturbed their German masters: "Intermittently, Hiwis beat the people with their rifle-butts, in order to enforce silence. The SD men had knotted whips, similar to horse whips. They walked along the rows of the squatting people, sometimes beating them vehemently."⁸ The men of Police Battalion 101 themselves were not to be outdone by their eastern European minions. Although they also degraded and tortured Jews at Międzyrzec in the most gratuitous, willful manner, their deeds are entirely absent from their testimony. The accounts of survivors tell a different, more accurate, and revealing story. Survivors are adamant that the Germans were indeed incredibly brutal, that their cruelty that day was wanton, at times turning into sadistic sport. At the marketplace, the Jews, who had been forced to squat for hours, were "mocked" (*hoysek gemacht*) and "kicked," and some of the Germans organized "a game" (*shpil*) of "tossing apples and whoever was struck by the apple was then killed." This sport was continued at the railway station, this



Men of Police Battalion 101 guard Jews of Międzyrzec on May 26, 1943. The Germans deported them to Majdanek, where the men of Police Battalion 101 and others slaughtered them in the November 1943 "Operation Harvest Festival."

time with empty liquor bottles. "Bottles were tossed over Jewish heads and whoever was struck by a bottle was dragged out of the crowd and beaten murderously amid roaring laughter. Then some of those who were thus mangled [scharger] were shot." Afterwards, they loaded the dead together with the living onto freight cars bound for Treblinka. One photograph documenting the final stage of what may be this deportation has survived (see next page).

Frightened Jewish women, urged on by the Germans (one can but guess how), are running with their children into a dark interior from which they will emerge only to be gassed. The German closest to them, whose identity is unknown, can be seen walking menacingly with a whip grasped firmly in hand.

Small wonder that to the eyes of the victims—but not in the self-serving testimony of the perpetrators—these ordinary Germans appeared not as mere murderers, certainly not as reluctant killers dragged to their task against their inner opposition to the genocide, but as "two-legged beasts" filled with "bloodthirstiness."⁹

The Germans report but rarely on their torturing of victims, on every unnecessary rifle-butt blow to a Jewish head, yet the evidence suggests that



Germans cramming Jewish women and children of Międzyrzec into freight cars.

the tortures which they inflicted in Międzyrzec and Łomazy (where they beat the bearded Jewish men whom they compelled to crawl to their execution) were not rare exceptions. Although the men of Police Battalion 101 do not tell of their cruelties in the mass deportation of Jews that they conducted from Łuków, one of the *Gendarmerie* stationed in Łuków recounts what he saw as he gazed out of his office window: "[The Jews] were driven on by the German policemen [*Polizeibeamter*]. I could see the way the policemen beat with clubs Jews who had collapsed. It was for me a shattering sight. People who could not rise to their feet by themselves were pulled up by the policemen. The beating was constant and the driving [of the Jews] was accompanied by yelling [*lautstark angetrieben*]. . . ."¹⁶⁶

The men of Police Battalion 101 report the cruelties of others, as of the Germans in the SD and of the *Hilwis* in Międzyrzec, while remaining reticent about their own. They fail to mention the clubs that they themselves used in this deportation and to what devastating effect they wielded them, although many of them were engaged in driving the Jews from this ghetto. Presumably, they used them for all their ghetto clearings and in other killing operations, though but scant indications of their use of clubs are to be found in the testimony. We learn of the whips in Józefów, the clubs in Łomazy (only because someone thought to recount the incident where the Germans beat the bearded Jews), and the whips in Międzyrzec, in each case from only one or two men. None of the Germans reveals that any of them used a whip in Łomazy. All we know of is the

one whip that was captured in one of the photographs that has surfaced from that day. The men of Police Battalion 101 similarly fail to volunteer accounts of the scene from Łuków documented in the two photographs on the next page.

Members of Police Battalion 101 mocked these Jews in Łuków before dispatching them and seven thousand others to the gas chambers of Treblinka. They forced them to wear prayer shawls, to kneel as if in prayer, and, perhaps, to chant prayers. The sight of Jewish religious objects and rituals evoked in the German "solvers of the Jewish Problem" derisive laughter and incited them to cruelty. In their eyes, these were undoubtedly the bizarre accouterments, the grotesque ceremonies, and the mysterious implements of a demonic brood. The Holocaust was one of the rare mass slaughters in which perpetrators, like these and other men of Police Battalion 101, routinely mocked their victims and forced them to perform antics before sending them to their deaths. These proud, joyous poses of German masters (note the beaming face in the first photo) degrading men who were for them archetypal Jews wearing prayer shawls (note the absent hat, presumably knocked off, in the second photo), are undoubtedly representative of many such scenes of degradation and others of cruelty about which the men of Police Battalion 101 remain silent, and about which the Jews did not survive to give witness. If we relied upon the specific and precise accounts of the battalion's members themselves, then we would have a skewed portrait of their actions, grossly underestimating the gratuitous suffering that they inflicted on the Jews, not to mention the evident gusto with which they at times visited cruelties upon their defenseless victims. Major Trapp, who was a killer with mixed emotions, at least once rebuked the men for their cruelty. One of his men tells of the disapproval Trapp expressed to the assembled battalion after the licentiousness of the initial killing operation in Józefów: "According to my memory he mentioned something to the effect that he could not agree with the maltreatment of the Jews *which he had observed* [my emphasis]. We had the task to shoot the Jews, but not to beat and torture them."¹⁶⁷ It is significant that the battalion member re-members not a categorical prohibition, but an expression of disapproval (Trapp was *nicht einverstanden*). Here is the voice of authority in the person of an atypical German commanding officer seeking to restrain the cruelty that had already welled up unbidden in his men. Trapp—unwittingly paraphrasing a line from Shakespeare: "We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers"¹⁶⁸—was saying to his men: Let us be killers, not torturers. But in vain, for his men persisted in their cruelties, as is evidenced by those which they perpetrated at Międzyrzec and elsewhere, and by the subsequent discussion and boasting among the men of the "awful excesses against Jews."¹⁶⁹

It cannot be doubted that a variety of attitudes towards the genocidal slaughter existed within Police Battalion 101. Even if general, principled ap-

proval reigned, the men approached their destructive tasks with a range of stances and emotions. Some "types" are the reveling, sadistic slayers of Jews, like Gnade and Bekemeier, the zealous but faint-of-heart killers, like Hoffmann,⁶⁴ the dedicated but non-celebratory executioners, like Grafmann, and the approving but uneasy and conflicted killers, like Trapp. These types differed in the amount of pleasure they took in the killing, without differing on the justice of the enterprise. Given the existing data, it is hard to know what the distribution of the various types was within the battalion. The information that exists about most of the individual men is insufficient for conclusions of this sort to be drawn. For the same reason, it is impossible to say how many men killed with what frequency. It is even harder to know how many men perpetrated what kinds of gratuitous cruelties and how often they did so. And it is impossible to know the exact emotions with which they gazed upon their labor's product, whether it was a pit filled or a street strewn with Jewish corpses, including those of the old and the young. It would have been surprising had any of the killers in the 1960s reported to the legal authorities, or to the world at large, feelings of joy and triumph that might have moved them while beholding these scenes. It is equally difficult to believe that these men looked upon the Jews whom they were slaughtering with fond or even neutral feelings, with sympathy for fellow human beings.

The evidence is, however, unequivocal that the overwhelming majority of the men in Police Battalion 101 rounded up and then killed or deported Jews to their deaths—and not just once, but repeatedly. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that only at the first mass slaughter of Józefów were the men shaken by their handiwork to the point where they asked to be excused, to the point where they also manifested signs of emotional difficulty. Had this reaction been the consequence of principled opposition and not mere disgust, the psychological and emotional strain would, with subsequent killings, have likely increased and not subsided completely, particularly since the men had repeatedly been offered a way out. But like medical students who might initially be shaken by their exposure to blood and guts yet who view their work as ethically laudable, these men easily adjusted to the unpleasant aspect of their calling. The moral approbation that the work met explains why only a small minority of Police Battalion 101's men asked to be excused from killing, and why the officers could rely upon volunteers to fill out the killing squads.⁶⁵ In this battalion, killing Jews was the norm in both senses of the word. Even the medical personnel killed. In First Company, in keeping with the all too familiar German perversion of medicine during the Nazi period, the two medical corpsmen inspected the Jews after they were shot, in order to ascertain whether or not they were dead. "It happened repeatedly that both finished them off with bullets [*Gnadenschüsse*] when the victims were still alive."⁶⁶ Not



Shortly before deporting the Jews of Łuków to their deaths in Treblinka, men of Police Battalion 101 take time out to force a group of Jews to pose for photographic mementos.

only did virtually all the men of this battalion kill, but they killed with dedication and zeal, which is not surprising, since, as one of the men testifies, "it is true, that among my comrades there were many fanatics."⁶⁷ Their unflagging contribution to the destruction of what was considered to be Germany's foremost enemy, international Jewry, was substantial, and worthy of recognition by higher authorities. Conrad Mehler, a member of First Company, received the Distinguished Service Cross (*Kriegsverdienstkreuz*), Second Class, its citation lauding him, among other reasons, because he "distinguished himself during the operations, evacuations, and deportations of Jews with hard and intrepid conduct."⁶⁸ The men of Police Battalion 101, together with those in their brother battalions of Police Regiment 25, received a final evaluation of their collective work from their commander, who, observing the purposely deceptive German language rules, did not explicitly mention the genocide, though he knew that their main task for much of their time in Lublin had been to slaughter Jews.

On the occasion of . . . leaving SS-Police-Regiment 25, I feel bound sincerely to thank you all, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men for your indefatigable work, as well as your proven loyalty to me and willingness to sacrifice. You have all given your best for *Führer, Volk*, and Fatherland in the tenacious, hard, and bloody partisan fighting. Carry on in the same spirit, and forward to victory!⁶⁹

Though the men of Police Battalion 101 may not, after the war, have publicly expressed pride in the collective and individual commendations that they had earned—over twenty of them received individual commendations—their citations (as evaluations of their devotion and effectiveness) were wholly deserved.⁷⁰ These accolades, of which they undoubtedly were not ashamed at the time, and the deeds that they rewarded—not the men's postwar denials—should be the final word on the actions and attitudes of the men of Police Battalion 101. They did not just do their job. In service to the German nation, they killed with distinction.

9

POLICE BATTALIONS:

LIVES, KILLINGS, AND MOTIVES

IN SURVEYING THE genocidal contributions of Police Battalion 101 and other police battalions, it becomes easy to view the perpetrators only through the prism of their murderous deeds. This produces some distortion. The extraordinary character of the killing operations, not surprisingly, leads many to consider the perpetrators and their deeds in isolation, sequestered from the rest of human social activity, from the "normal" workings of society, in part because the genocidal deeds seem not to inhabit the same social or moral universe but to belong to a special sub-universe of reality. This can lead to caricature of the perpetrators and their lives. These Germans partook in activities other than genocidal slaughter, and they lived a social existence. Understanding them and their deeds requires that the non-killing aspects of their lives be acknowledged and investigated.

Police battalions did not kill in a social or cultural vacuum. The Germans had rapidly constructed for themselves an institutional network and cultural existence in Poland that was, in its essence, autonomous from Poles (not to mention Jews), as befitting self-conceived *Übermenschen* who had come to displace "subhumans" and to remake conquered territory in their own image. In fact, an elaborate German cultural life in Poland was the locus for police battalion existence in Poland. After slaughtering unarmed Jews by the thousands, the police battalion men returned to the more conventional type of German cultural life. Their cultural activities—the police's "clubs, recreation centers, and canteens," the sporting events, movies and plays, religious

men and women and all soldiers of the Wehrmacht, that they remain faithful and obedient unto death to the new government and its president.

Above all, I enjoin the government and the people to uphold the race laws to the limit and to resist mercilessly the poisoner of all nations, international Jewry.

Berlin, 29 April, 1945, 4 A.M.

ADOLF HITLER

Witnesses:

DR. JOSEPH GOEBBELS

MARTIN BORMANN

WILHELM BURGDORF

HANS KREBS

*Witness to the Holocaust, Michael Berenson.
Harper Collins New York 1997*

PROTOCOLS OF THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE

JANUARY 20, 1942

Translation of Document No. NG-2586
Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes

MINUTES OF DISCUSSION

I. The following persons took part in the discussion about the Final Solution of the Jewish question which took place in Berlin, *an grossen Wannsee* No.56/58 on 20 January 1942.

Gauleiter Dr. MEYER and Reichsemtsleiter
Under Secretary of State Dr. STUCKART
Under Secretary of State NEUMANN
Under Secretary of State Dr. FREISLER
Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER
Unterstaatssekretaer LUTHER
SS Oberführer KLOPPER
Ministerialdirektor KRITZINGER
(handwritten note):
D III. 29 Top Secret.
SS Gruppenführer HOFMANN
SS Gruppenführer MUELLER
SS Oberführer Dr. SCHOENGARTH
SS Sturmbannführer Dr. LANGE
Reich Ministry for Dr. LEIBERANDT
Occupied Eastern territories

Reich Ministry for the Interior
Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan
Reich Ministry of Justice
Office of the Government General
Foreign Office
Party Chancellory
Reich Chancellory
Race and Settlement Main Office
Reich Main Security Office
SS Obersturmbannführer EICHMANN
Security Police and Chief of the Security Police SD and
the SD in the Government General
Security Police and Commander of the Security Police
SD and the SD for the General district Latvia, as
deputy of the Commander of the Security Police and
the SD for the Reich Commissariat "Eastland."

II. At the beginning of the discussion SS Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH gave information that the Reich Marshal had appointed him delegate for the preparations for the Final Solution of the Jewish problem in Europe and pointed out that this discussion had been called for the purpose of clarifying fundamental questions. The wish of the Reich Marshal to have a draft sent to him concerning organizational, factual, and material interests in relation to the Final Solution of the Jewish problem in Europe, makes necessary an initial common action of all Central Offices immediately concerned with these questions in order to bring their general activities onto line.

He said that the Reichsführer-SS and the Chief of the German Police (Chief of the Security Police and the SD) was entrusted with the official handling of the Final Solution of the Jewish problem centrally without regard to geographic borders.

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD then gave a short report of the struggle which has been carried on against this enemy, the essential points being the following:

- A. the expulsion of the Jews from every particular sphere of life of the German people,
- B. the expulsion of the Jews from the *Lebensraum* of the German people.

In carrying out these efforts, an increased and planned acceleration of the emigration of Jews from the Reich territory was started, as the only possible present solution.

By order of the Reich Marshal a Reich Central Office for Jewish emigration was set up in January 1939, and the Chief of the Security Police and SD was entrusted with the management. Its most important tasks were:

- A. to *make* all necessary arrangements for the *preparation* for an increased emigration of the Jews,
- B. to *direct* the flow of immigration,
- C. to *hurry* up the procedure of emigration in each *individual case*.

The aim of all this being that of clearing the German Lebensraum of Jews in a legal way.

All the offices realized the drawbacks of such enforced accelerated emigration. For the time being they had, however, tolerated it on account of the lack of other possible solutions to the problem.

The work concerned with emigration was, later on, not only a German problem, but also a problem with which the authorities of the countries to which the flow of emigrants was being directed would have a deal. Financial difficulties, such as the demand for increasing sums of money to be presented at the time of the landing on the part of various foreign governments, lack of shipping space, increasing restriction of entry permits, or canceling of such, extraordinarily increased the difficulties of emigration. In spite of these difficulties 537,000 Jews were sent out of the country between the day of the seizure of power and the deadline 31 October 1941. Of these as from 30 January from Germany proper approx. 360,000, from 15 March 1938 from Austria (Ostmark) approx. 147,000, from 15 March 1939 from the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia approx. 30,000.

The Jews themselves, or rather their Jewish political organizations financed the emigration. In order to avoid the possibility of the impoverished Jews staying behind, action was taken to make the wealthy Jews finance the evacuation of the needy Jews. This was arranged by imposing a suitable tax, i.e. an emigration tax which was used for the financial arrangements in connection with the emigration of poor Jews, and was worked according to a ladder system.

Apart from the necessary reichsmark exchange, foreign currency had to be presented at the time of the landing. In order to save foreign exchange held by Germany, the Jewish financial establishments in foreign countries were—with the help of Jewish organizations in Germany—made responsible for arranging for an adequate amount of foreign currency. Up to 30 October 1941, the foreign Jews donated approx. \$9,500,000.

In the meantime the Reichsführer-SS and

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Chief of the German Police had prohibited emigration of Jews for reasons of the dangers of an emigration during wartime and consideration of the possibilities in the East.

III. Another possible solution of the problem has now taken the place of emigration, i.e. the evacuation of the Jews to the East, provided the Führer agrees to this plan.

Such activities are, however, to be considered as provisional actions, but practical experience is already being collected which is of greatest importance in relation to the future Final Solution of the Jewish problem.

Approx. 11,000,000 Jews will be involved in this Final Solution of the European problem, they are distributed as follows among the countries:

| COUNTRY | NUMBER |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Germany proper | 131,800 |
| Austria | 43,700 |
| Eastern territories | 420,000 |
| General Government | 2,284,000 |
| Bialystok | 400,000 |
| Protectorate of Bohemia & Moravia | 74,000 |
| Estonia | -no Jews- |
| Latvia | 3,500 |
| Lithuania | 34,000 |
| Belgium | 43,000 |
| Denmark | 5,600 |
| France/Occupied France | 165,000 |
| Unoccupied France | 700,000 |
| Greece | 69,000 |
| Netherlands | 160,800 |
| Norway | 1,300 |
| Bulgaria | 48,000 |
| England | 330,000 |
| Finland | 2,300 |
| Ireland | 4,000 |
| Italy incl. Sardinia | 58,000 |
| Albania | 200 |
| Croatia | 40,000 |
| Portugal | 43,000 |
| Romania incl. Bossarabia | 342,000 |

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Sweden | 8,000 |
| Switzerland | 18,000 |
| Serbia | 10,000 |
| Slovakia | 88,000 |
| Spain | 6,000 |
| Turkey (European Turkey) | 55,500 |
| Hungary | 742,800 |
| USSR | 2,994,684 |
| Ukraine/White Russia with exception of Bialystok | 446,484 |
| Total: | over 11,000,000 |

The number of Jews given here for foreign countries includes, however, only those Jews who still adhere to the Jewish faith as the definition of the term "Jew" according to racial principles is still partially missing there. The handling of the problem in the individual countries will meet with difficulties due to the attitude and conception of the people there, especially in Hungary and Romania. Thus, even today a Jew can buy documents in Hungary which will officially prove his foreign citizenship.

The influence of the Jews in all walks of life in the USSR is well known. Approximately five million Jews are living in the European Russia, and in Asiatic Russia scarcely one-quarter million.

The breakdown of Jews residing in the European part of the USSR, according to trades, was approximately as follows:

| | |
|--|-------|
| in agriculture | 9.1% |
| communal workers | 14.8% |
| in trade | 20.0% |
| employed by the state | 23.4% |
| in private occupations such as medical profession, newspapers, theater, etc. | 32.7% |

Under proper guidance the Jews are now to be allocated for labor to the East in the course of the Final Solution. Able-bodied Jews will be taken in large labor columns to these districts for work on roads, separated according to sexes,

in the course of which action a great part will undoubtedly be eliminated by natural causes.

The possible final remnant will, as it must undoubtedly consist of the toughest, have to be treated accordingly, as it is the product of natural selection, and would, if liberated, act as a bud cell of a Jewish reconstruction (see historical experience).

In the course of the practical execution of this final settlement of the problem, Europe will be cleaned up from the West to the East. Germany proper, including the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, will have to be handled first because of reasons of housing and other social-political necessities.

The evacuated Jews will first be sent, group by group, into so-called transit ghettos from which they will be taken to the East.

SS Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH went on to say that an important provision for the evacuation as such is the exact definition of the group of persons concerned in the matter.

It is intended not to evacuate Jews of more than sixty-five years of age but to send them to an old-age ghetto—Theresienstadt is being considered for this purpose.

Next is these age groups—of the 280,000 Jews still in Germany proper and Austria on 31 October 1941, approximately 30 percent are over sixty-five; Jews disabled on active duty and Jews with war decorations (Iron Cross I) will be accepted in the Jewish old-age ghettos.

Through such an expedient solution the numerous interventions will be eliminated with one blow.

The carrying out of each single evacuation project of a larger extent will start at a time to be determined chiefly by the military developments. Regarding the handling of the Final Solution in the European territories occupied and influenced by us it was suggested that the competent officials of the Foreign Office working on these questions confer with the competent *Referenten* from the Security Police and the SD.

In Slovakia and Croatia the difficulties arising from this question have been considerably reduced, as the most essential problems in this

field have already been brought near to a solution. In Romania the government in the meantime has also appointed a commissioner for Jewish questions. In order to settle the question in Hungary it is imperative that an *advisor in Jewish questions be pressed upon the Hungarian government without too much delay.*

As regards the taking of preparatory steps to settle the question in Italy SS Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH considers it opportune to contact the chief of the police with a view to these problems.

In the occupied and unoccupied parts of France the registration of the Jews for evacuation can in all probability be expected to take place without great difficulties.

Assistant Under Secretary of State LUTHER in this connection calls attention to the fact that in some countries, such as the Scandinavian states, difficulties will arise if these problems are dealt with thoroughly and that it will be therefore advisable to defer action in these countries. Besides, considering the small number of Jews to be evacuated from these countries this deferment means not essential limitation.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office anticipated no great difficulties as far as the Southeast and the West of Europe are concerned.

SS Gruppenführer HOFMANN intends to send an official from the Main Race and Settlement Office to Hungary for general orientation at the time when the first active steps to bring up the question in this country will be taken by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD. It was determined officially to detail this official, who is not supposed to work actively, temporarily from the Main Race and Settlement Office as assistant to the police attaché.

IV. The implementation of the Final Solution is supposed to a certain extent to be based on the Nuremberg Laws, in which connection also the solution of the problems presented by the mixed marriages and the persons of mixed blood is seen to be conditional to an absolutely final clarification of the question.

The chief of the Security Police and the SD first discussed, with reference to a letter from the chief of the Reich Chancellery, the following points theoretically:

I. *Treatment of Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree.*

Persons of mixed blood of the first degree will, as regards the Final Solution of the Jewish questions, be treated as Jews. From this treatment the following persons will be exempt:

- A. Persons of mixed blood of the first degree married to persons of German blood if their marriage has resulted in children (persons of mixed blood of the second degree). Such persons of mixed blood of the second degree are to be treated essentially as Germans.
- B. Persons of mixed blood of the first degree to whom up till now in any sphere of life whatever exemption licenses have been issued by the highest party or state authorities.

Each individual case must be examined, in which process it will still be possible that a decision unfavorable to the persons of mixed blood can be passed. In any such case only *personal* essential merit of the person of mixed blood must be deemed a ground justifying the granting of an exemption. (Not merits of the parent or of the partner of German blood.)

Any person of mixed blood of the first degree to whom exception from the evacuation is granted will be sterilized—in order to eliminate the possibility of offspring and to secure a final solution of the problem presented by the persons of mixed blood. The sterilization will take place on a voluntary basis. But it will be conditional to a permission to stay in the Reich. Following the sterilizations the person of mixed blood will be liberated from all restrictive regulations which have so far been imposed upon him.

II. *Treatment of Persons of Mixed Blood of the Second Degree.*

Persons of mixed blood of the second degree will fundamentally be treated as persons of German blood, *with the exception of the following cases* in which persons of mixed blood of the second degree will be treated as Jews:

- A. The person of mixed blood of the second degree is the result of a marriage where both parents are persons of mixed blood.
- B. The general appearance of the person of mixed blood of the second degree is racially particularly objectionable so that he already outwardly must be included among the Jews.
- C. The person of mixed blood of the second degree has a particularly bad police and political record sufficient to reveal that he feels and behaves like a Jew.

But also in these cases exceptions are not to be made if the person of mixed blood of the second degree is married to a person of German blood.

III. *Marriages between Full Jews and Persons of German Blood.*

Here it must be decided from one individual case to another whether the Jewish partner is to be evacuated, or whether in consideration of the effects produced by such measure upon the German relatives of the mixed marriage he is to be committed to a ghetto for aged Jews.

IV. *Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of German Blood.*

- A. Without children:

If no children have resulted from the marriage the parents of mixed blood of the first degree will be evacuated or committed to a ghetto for old Jews. (The same treatment as in the case of marriages between full Jews and persons of German blood, Point 3).

- B. With children:

If the marriage has resulted in children (persons of mixed blood of the

second degree) these children will be evacuated or committed to a ghetto together with the parents of mixed blood of the first degree, *if they are to be treated as Jews*. If the children are to be *treated as Germans* (regular cases) they will be exempt from evacuation and in that case the same applies to the parent of mixed blood of the first degree.

V. *Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree or Jews.*

In the case of these marriages (including the children) all members of the family will be treated as Jews, therefore, evacuated or committed to a ghetto for old Jews.

VI. *Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of Mixed Blood of the Second Degree.*

Both partners will be evacuated, regardless of whether or not they have children, or committed to a ghetto for old Jews, since as a rule these children will racially reveal the admixture of Jewish blood more strongly than persons of mixed blood of the second degree.

SS Gruppenführer HOFMANN advocated the opinion that sterilization must be applied on a large scale; in particular as the person of mixed blood placed before the alternative as whether to be evacuated or to be sterilized, would rather submit to the sterilization.

Under Secretary of State Dr. STUCKHART maintains that the possible solutions enumerated above for a clarification of the problems presented by mixed marriages and by persons of mixed blood when translated into practice in this form would involve endless administrative work. In the second place, as the biological facts cannot be disregarded in any case, it was suggested by Dr. STUCKHART to proceed to forced sterilization.

Further, for the purpose of simplifying the problem of mixed marriages it would be required to consider how it could be possible to attain the

object that the legislator can declare: "This marriage *has been* dissolved."

Regarding the question of the effects produced by the evacuation of Jews on the economic life, Under Secretary of State NEUMANN declared that the Jews assigned to work in plants of importance for the war could not be evacuated as long as no replacement was available.

SS Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH pointed out that, according to the directives approved by him governing the carrying out of the evacuation program in operation at that time, these Jews would not be evacuated.

Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER stated that it would be welcomed by the Government General if the implementation of the final solution of this question could *start in the Government General*, because the transportation problem there was of no predominant importance and the progress of this action would not be hampered by considerations connected with the supply of labor. The Jews had to be removed as quickly as possible from the territory of the Government General because, especially there, the Jews represented an immense danger as carriers of epidemics, and on the other hand were permanently contributing to the disorganization of the economic system of the country through black market operations. Moreover, out of the two-and-a-half million Jews to be affected, the majority of cases were *unfit for work*.

Under Secretary of State BUEHLER further stated that the solution of the Jewish question in the Government General as far as the issuing of orders was concerned was dependent upon the chief of the Security Police and the SD, his work being supported by the administrative authorities of the Government General. He had this one request only, namely that the Jewish question in this territory be solved as quickly as possible.

Towards the end of the conference the various types of possible solutions were discussed; in the course of this discussion Gauleiter Dr. MEYER as well as Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER advocated the view that certain preparatory mea-

asures incidental to the carrying out of the Final Solution ought to be initiated immediately in the very territories under discussion, in which process, however, alarming the population must be avoided.

With the request to the persons present from the chief of the Security Police and the SD that they lend him appropriate assistance in the carrying out of the tasks involved in the solution, the conference was adjourned.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLOCAUST, Van Cohn - Sher-bok
Cassie London/New York, 1999. P146-155

15. The Wannsee Conference and aftermath

The Nazi onslaught against the Jewish people proceeded in stages, from prejudice and discrimination to annihilation. In this sequence of events, the Wannsee Conference of 20 January 1942 in a villa outside Berlin marked the final stage of this process. The result of the conference was the official adoption of the Final Solution to the Jewish problem. In the war against the Soviet Union, the *Einsatzgruppen* had systematically murdered Jews wherever they were found. Following Wannsee, the decision to exterminate Jews became a central feature of Nazi policy.

The beginning of the end

Having embarked on the task of deporting Jews to their destination in the east, Germany was confronted with the practical problem of defining criteria for those who were to be transported. In addition, the process of uprooting thousands of people from their homes, transporting them during wartime, and relocating them in new dwellings became a major logistical problem. What was required was a coordinated system. To resolve these dilemmas, Heydrich invited a group of senior officials to a conference to discuss this issue. An invitation addressed to *SS Gruppenführer* Hoffmann of the *SS Race and Settlement Office* in Berlin read:

On 31.7.1941, the Reich Marshal of the Greater German Reich charged me, in cooperation with all the other relevant central agencies, to make all the necessary preparations with regard to organizational, technical and material measures for a complete solution of the Jewish question in

Europe and to present him shortly with a complete draft proposal on this matter. . . . In view of the extraordinary importance which must be accorded to these questions, and in the interest of securing a uniform view among the relevant central agencies of the further tasks concerned with the remaining work on this final solution, I propose to make these problems the subject of a general discussion. This is particularly necessary since from 10 October onwards the Jews have been being evacuated from Reich territory, including the Protectorate, to the East in a continuous series of transports.¹

Anxious to know what was envisaged, Hans Frank sent his Secretary Dr Buhler to see Heydrich. In a meeting with the senior officials of the General Government, Frank explained what was to be done with the Jewish populace:

As for the Jews - I will be quite open with you - they will have to be finished off one way or the other. The Führer said once: if the whole of Jewry once again succeeds in unleashing a world war, then peoples who have been hounded into this war will not be the only ones to shed their blood because the Jews in Europe will meet their end. I know that man of the measures now being taken against the Jews in the Reich are criticized. It is clear from the reports on popular opinion that there are accusations of cruelty and harshness. Before I continue, I would like you to agree with me on the following principle: we are only prepared to show compassion towards the German people and to no one else on earth. The others did not show compassion towards us. As an old National Socialist, I must state that if the Jewish clan were to survive the war in Europe, while we had sacrificed our best blood in the defence of Europe, then this war would only represent a partial success. With respect to the Jews, therefore, I will only operate on the assumption that they will disappear.²

The Wannsee Conference took place on 20 January 1942. The minutes prepared by Adolf Eichmann, record the nature of the discussion:

The chief of the Security Police and SD, *SS Oberguppenführer* Heydrich, began by announcing his appointment by the Reich Marshal as the person responsible for the preparation of the final solution of the European Jewish question and pointed out that this meeting was being held to achieve clarity on basic questions. The Reich Marshal's wish that he should be sent a draft on the organizational, technical, and material matters regarding the final solution of the European Jewish question made it necessary that all central authorities directly concerned with

these questions should deal with them together in advance so as to ensure the coordination of the lines to be taken. . . .

The Chief of the Security Police and SD then gave a brief review of the struggle which had been waged hitherto against these opponents. The basic elements were

(a) the exclusion of the Jews from the individual spheres of German life.
 (b) the exclusion of the Jews from the living space of the German people.
 In pursuit of these efforts, the acceleration of the emigration of Jews from the Reich territory was increased and systematically adopted as provisionally the only feasible solution.

In January 1939, on the orders of the Reich Marshal, a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established and the Chief of the Security Police and SD was appointed to head it . . . the objective was to purge Germany's living space of Jews in a legal fashion. . . .

The financing of the emigration was undertaken by the Jews or rather Jewish political organizations themselves. To avoid the proletarianized Jews remaining behind, the principle was followed that the wealthy Jews had to finance the emigration of the propertyless Jews . . . foreign Jewish financial institutions were requested by our domestic Jewish organizations to ensure the provision of sufficient foreign exchange . . . in view of the dangers involved in emigration during the war, and in view of the opportunities provided by the east, the *Reichsführer SS* and Chief of the German Police had later banned emigration.

The evacuation of the Jews to the east has now emerged, with the prior permission of the Führer, as a further possible solution instead of emigration. These actions, however, must be regarded only as an alternative solution, but already the practical experience is being gathered which is of great importance to the coming final solution of the Jewish question. . . .

In pursuance of the final solution, the Jews will be conscripted for labour in the east under appropriate supervision. Large labour gangs will be formed from those fit for work, with the sexes separated, which will be sent to these areas for road construction and undoubtedly a large number of them will drop out through natural wastage. The remainder who survive – and they will certainly be those who have the greatest powers of endurance – will have to be dealt with accordingly. For, if released, they would, as a natural selection of the fittest, form a germ cell from which the Jewish race could regenerate itself.³

The minutes of the Wannsee Conference were circulated to a wide range of government departments and SS head offices – the language used was designed to disguise the true intentions of those gathered at the conference. As is clear from the interrogation of Adolf Eichmann

by the Israelis in 1960, the Final Solution of the Jewish problem was understood by the participants at the conference as referring to extermination:

What I know is that the gentlemen sat together, and then in very blunt terms – not in the language that I had to use in the minutes, but in very blunt terms – they talked about the matter without any circumlocution. I certainly could not have remembered that if I had not recalled saying to myself at the time: look, just look at Stuckart, who was always regarded as a legal pedant, punctilious and fussy, and now what a different tone! The language being used here was very unlegalistic. I should say that this is the only thing from all this that has still stuck clearly in my mind.

Presiding Judge: What did he say on this matter?

Answer: In particular, Mr President, I would like to . . .

Question: Not in particular – in general!

Answer: The talk was of killing, elimination, and annihilation.⁴

Following the Wannsee Conference, Hitler in his annual address to the *Reichstag* on the anniversary of his appointment as Reich Chancellor stated his intentions regarding the Jewish community:

We are clear about the fact that the war can only end either in the extermination of the Aryan nations or in the disappearance of Jewry from Europe. On 1 September 1939, I already announced in the German *Reichstag* – and I avoid making premature prophecies – that this would not end as the Jews imagined, namely with the extermination of the European-Aryan nations, but rather that the war will result in the destruction of Jewry. This time, for the first time, the old and typical Jewish law will be applied 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'.

And the more the fighting spreads, the more – and world Jewry should take note of it – anti-Semitism will spread. It will find nourishment in every prisoner-of-war camp, in every family which becomes aware of the reason why it has had to make its sacrifice. And the hour will come when the most evil enemy of the world of all time will for at least a thousand years have played his last role.⁵

In the months that followed, the Nazis rounded up Jews for deportation to their deaths. Aware of their eventual fate, these innocent victims sought to hide or escape from their oppressors. 'We tremble at the mention of Lublin,' Chaim Kaplan wrote in his diary. 'Our blood turns to ice when we listen to tales told by refugees from the city. Even before they arrived in the Warsaw ghetto, the rumours

reaching us were so frightful that we thought they came from totally unreliable sources.' Yet there was no escape. As Kaplan recorded in his diary:

As Jews tried to escape, the Nazis hunted them down. Heading the advice of the prophet, 'Wait a little until the danger is past', some Jews tried to conceal themselves in obscure holes and corners. Perhaps God would have mercy and spare them? Perhaps the Keeper of Israel would take pity? But the killers discovered the hiding places and swiftly put to death anyone they found. Some of the Jews suffocated in these airless holes even before the Nazis discovered them, for the doors could not be opened from within and there was no one to open them from without because everyone above ground had been arrested.⁶

Such a round-up of Jews was often undertaken with lightning speed. On 11 April 1942, for example, an eye-witness of such an event in Zamosc recalled:

The SS, SD and the mounted police fell like a pack of savages on the Zamosc Jewish quarter. It was a complete surprise. The brutes on horseback in particular created a panic; they raced through the streets shouting insults, slashing out on all sides with their whips. Our community then numbered 10,000 people. In a twinkling, without even realizing what was happening, a crowd of 3000 men, women and children, picked up haphazardly in the streets and in the houses, were driven to the station and deported to an unknown destination.

The spectacle which the ghetto presented after the attack literally drove the survivors mad. Bodies everywhere, in the streets, in the courtyards, inside the houses; babies thrown from the third or fourth floors lay crushed on the pavements. The Jews themselves had to pick up and bury the dead.⁷

When the Gestapo entered the Warsaw ghetto the same month, they went from one building to the next. As Chaim Kaplan noted:

At 36 Nowolipki Street a man by the name of Goldberg was killed. He was a barber in peacetime, and when the war broke out he went to work in the quarantine house. His wife worked there too. When he was killed, his wife set up a terrible wailing and would not leave his side. To silence her, they killed her too. Both were left lying by the gate. In death as in life they remained inseparable.

The baker, David Blajman, on Gesia Street, was murdered in the same

way. They came to take the husband but the frantic wife ran after him. To rid themselves of this hindrance, the murderers killed her along with her husband. The morning light revealed both bodies at the gate.⁸

In her diary, Mary Berg recalled the events that took place on 17 April:

All the bakers were terrified. Epstein and Wagner, who own the bakery in our house, no longer sleep at home. The Germans come to various houses with a prepared list of names and addresses. If they do not find the persons they are looking for, they take another member of the same family instead. They lead him a few steps in front of the house, politely let him precede them, and then shoot him in the back. The next morning these people are found lying dead in the streets. If a janitor fails to open the door for the Germans as quickly as they want him to, he is shot on the spot. If a member of the janitor's family opens the door the same fate befalls him, and later the janitor is summoned to be killed, too.⁹

On 8 May Jews in the White Russian village of Radun discovered that the ghetto had been sealed off. Several days later, a group of Jews were given spades, marched out of the ghetto, and forced to dig pits. Fearing for their lives, some Jews attempted to flee. As Avraham Aviel related, he had tried to escape from the ghetto to meet his father in a nearby wood. Yet, it was feared he was too small to join the others as partisans, and he returned to the ghetto:

I tried to hide my smaller brother and my mother and the people who were with us in the house. I tried to hide them in the attic. I covered them with rags and boxes, then I went down and I tried to find out what was happening. As soon as I went down from the attic, I heard a terrible noise. Motorcycles were coming in. There were shouts. Germans came in from the direction of Lida in battle uniform equipped with automatic weapons as if they were marching out to the front. It was a different uniform from what we had seen before. They had about the same uniform as that very first group had when they killed those 40 people. I left the house and I saw a great mass of Jews being pushed from the edge of the ghetto, being driven on in the direction of Grodno. . . . At that moment a number of Germans entered our house. One of them stood at the entrance blocking it and the others scattered in the rooms and began searching and driving out people who were not yet in hiding. . . . Unfortunately, however, I saw my mother, my small brother, an uncle and other Jews included in the group of those people who were found

and my little brother then told me later that they were beaten severely. Then we marched together in this direction in which we were driven.¹⁰

Resistance against the German onslaught was seen as futile. On 10 June 1942 Jews of Biala Podlaska were deported to Sobibor. Later Emanuel Ringelblum spoke to the head of the Jewish Social Relief Organization in Biala Podlaska. 'How much longer will we be slaughtered?', he asked. This question, he continued,

haunts all of us, but there is no answer to it because everyone knows that resistance, and particularly if even one German is killed, its outcome may lead to a slaughter of a whole community, or even of many communities. The first who are sent to slaughter are the old, the sick, the children, those who are not able to resist. The strong ones, the workers, are left meanwhile to be, because they are needed for the time being.

The evacuations are carried out in such a way that it is not always and not to everyone clear that a massacre is taking place. So strong is the instinct of the workers, of the fortunate owners of work permits, that it overcomes the will to fight, the urge to defend the whole community, with no thought of consequences. And we are left to be led as sheep to a slaughterhouse. This is partly due to the complete spiritual breakdown and disintegration caused by the unheard-of terror which has been inflicted upon the Jews for three years and comes to its climax in times of such evacuations.¹¹

Despite such despair, there were numerous acts of resistance. In Warsaw, for example, two porters were suspected of smuggling and taken to be executed. In his diary, Chaim Kaplan depicted their struggle against these murderers:

In the dark of the night a wrestling match began between those who were defending their lives and the killers. The porters fought with the strength of their bodies, without weapons; the killers were armed and confident of their superiority.

At such times there is no rational thought. Instinct comes in its stead. In time of danger the latent, hidden powers of a man burst out and are exposed; and in particular when one finds oneself in a condition of 'in any case we will die'. And therefore, before the killers had time to act, the condemned men pounced on them and tried to seize the pistols. One of the porters went off and wounded the tailor in the leg. Then the two sides wrestled until their strength waned, and in the end the killers,

who still had their weapons, were victorious. ... On the morrow, the Nazis avenged the mutiny of the two porters with 100 Jews. They were put to death for the sins of men who had never laid eyes on them.¹²

Discussion: The annihilation of the Jews

The Wannsee Conference marked a turning-point in the Nazi quest to ensure that Europe was *judenrein* (free of Jews). In Poland terror squads were responsible for the elimination of the Polish elite, and haphazardly for Jews as well. With the conquest of Russian territory, the *Einsatzgruppen* were officially instructed to follow the German army into the Soviet Union and protect its rear from partisan attack. Yet, as we have seen, their real aim was to eliminate the Jewish population. Between 1½ and 2 million Jews were slaughtered by these mobile killing units. All Jews were perceived as supporters of Bolshevism, and thus dangerous subversives. In addition, since the children of Jews were destined to become enemies of Germany, they were to be annihilated as well. At times, commanders told their troops that killings were necessary to prevent typhus and other diseases.

In general the *Einsatzgruppen* were accepted by the army so long as they did not interfere with army activities. Despite the claim after the war that the mobile killing units acted without the compliance of the military, there is substantial evidence to illustrate that there was ample collaboration between the *Einsatzgruppen* and the *Wehrmacht* in rounding up victims as well as in the shootings themselves. In this connection, it was policy for the army to hand over all Jewish prisoners of war to the SS for execution.

Who were those individuals who made up the *Einsatzgruppen*? In general the commanders of these killing units were middle-class in origin. Many were professionals: doctors, lawyers and intellectuals. Organized into four units, Group A consisted of 900 men and operated in the Baltic states; B was operative in the north-central region of Russia; C was located in the vicinity of Kiev; and D had a strength of 500 men and advanced behind the most southern army in the Crimea. Each of these groups was augmented by auxiliary troops of native eastern Europeans including ethnic Germans in Poland. A sizeable contingent of volunteers were from the Baltic States and Romania. Innocent of the intentions of the Nazis, the people in conquered

territories were totally unprepared for the ferocity of the German onslaught. When told that Jews were to be resettled, these Russian Jews believed the victors. When they were ordered to assemble in the town square, they complied. Told to climb aboard trucks, they were obedient. However, once the first wave of killings took place, rumours were rife and the round-up of victims became more difficult. Hundreds of thousands of Jews fled to the east. During the next few months of the operation, however, the numbers of individual Jews killed by the Germans was overwhelming. In the first five months of the operation approximately half a million men, women and children were killed, and a second wave was instructed to kill those who remained.

Records of the action of the *Einsatzgruppen* reveal the barbarity of their methods. Commanders of these groups adopted different approaches in the killing process: some desired that their victims should kneel before the were shot; others wanted them standing. In some cases Jewish victims were compelled to hand over their possessions; other Nazi soldiers wanted houses to remain intact before they were confiscated by SS personnel. Yet, despite such differences in approach, the pattern of murder remained much the same. Once the German army had passed through a Russian town, those who had fled to the woods came back to their homes. In a short time, *Einsatzgruppen* troops appeared. The officer in charge asked for the rabbi or head of the Jewish town council. All Jews were then instructed to assemble in the town square; a roll-call was then conducted with the alleged intent of resettling the community.

When the black-shirted commander appeared, he told the assembled multitude that there was to be a change in plan. Everyone was told to go to a hillside several kilometres outside the town. Groups of about 100 were to leave every ten minutes; those who were too weak to walk were taken by truck. When these individuals arrived at the hill they were met by a squad of SS men who told families to get undressed. Eventually the *Einsatzkommando* opened fire on these individuals and they plunged into mass graves. Not all were killed in this onslaught, however, and those who survived attempted to climb out of this grave. In time more victims arrived who were shot in turn and fell upon the wounded who were struggling to escape.


This process of mass slaughter was too laborious. What was required was a more efficient and less emotionally demanding method. Initially the use of gas vans was designed to resolve these

dilemmas. At first the vans were used in Chelmno. There an isolated mansion had been converted into a killing site: three vans were equipped to asphyxiate Jews from Lodz. Allegedly these vans were to be used as de-lousing quarters. Approximately 50 men, women and children were ordered to climb into each van, unaware that a hose had been attached to the exhaust pipe of the diesel motor so that carbon monoxide fumes would be directed into the interior. After 15 minutes, all those inside would have died and the driver stopped near a pit where a group of Jews, the *Sonderkommando*, emptied the van.

The gas vans were a short-lived solution. In their place, fixed killing centres were established at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz, adopting similar methods to those used during the euthanasia programme. In place of carbon monoxide, Zyklon-B gas was used. With this machinery in place, ghettos were emptied and trainloads of Jews from Nazi-occupied territory made their way to Poland. Under SS Major-General Odilo Globocnik, the Final Solution was carried out in accordance with the plans laid at the Wannsee Conference.

Notes

- 1 Nuremberg Document PS-709.
- 2 W. Präg and W. Jacobmeyer (eds), *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939-1945*, Stuttgart, 1975, pp. 457-8 in J. Noakes and G. Pridham, *op. cit.*, p. 1126.
- 3 L. Poliakov and J. Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, Frankfurt, 1983, pp. 119-26 in J. Noakes and G. Pridham, *op. cit.*, pp. 1127-31.
- 4 G. Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution*, London, 1985, pp. 91-2.
- 5 M. Domarus, *Hitler, Reden 1932 bis 1945*, Wiesbaden, 1973, pp. 1828-9 in J. Noakes and G. Pridham, *op. cit.*, p. 1135.
- 6 Kaplan diary, 7 April 1942, in Abraham Katsch (ed.), *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan*, New York, 1973, pp. 312-13.
- 7 Testimony of David Mekler, *Miriam Novitch Collection*, Kibbutz Lohamei Hagettatot, Israel, in Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-20.
- 8 Kaplan diary, 18 April 1942, in Katsch, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
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- 10 Testimony of Avraham Aviel, Eichmann Trial, 5 May 1961, session 29.
- 11 Joseph Kermish, 'Emanuel Ringelblum's Notes Hitherto Unpublished', *Yad Vashem Studies*, VII, Jerusalem, 1968, pp. 178-80.
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Judenrat

As far back as 1933, Nazi policy makers had discussed establishing Jewish-led institutions to carry out anti-Jewish policies. The concept was based upon centuries-old practices which were instituted in Germany during the Middle Ages. As the German army swept through Poland and the Soviet Union, it carried out an order of S.S. leader Heydrich to require the local Jewish populace to form Jewish Councils as a liaison between the Jews and the Nazis. These councils of Jewish elders, (*Judenrat*; plural: *Judenrät*), were responsible for organizing the orderly deportation to the death camps, for detailing the number and occupations of the Jews in the ghettos, for distributing food and medical supplies, and for communicating the orders of the ghetto Nazi masters. The Nazis enforced these orders on the Judenrat with threats of terror, which were given credence by beatings and executions. As ghetto life settled into a "routine," the Judenrat took on the functions of local government, providing police and fire protection, postal services, sanitation, transportation, food and fuel distribution, and housing, for example.

The Judenrat raised funds to create hospitals, homes for orphans, disinfection stations, and to provide food and clothing to those without.

Jewish leaders were ambivalent about participating in these Judenröte. On the one hand, many viewed these councils as a form of collaboration with the enemy. Others saw these councils as a necessary evil, which would permit Jewish leadership a forum to negotiate for better treatment. In the many cases where Jewish leaders refused to volunteer to serve on the Judenrat, the Germans appointed Jews to serve on a random basis. Some Jews who had no prior history of leadership agreed to serve, hoping that it would improve their chances of survival. Many who served in the Judenrat were arrested, taken to labor camps, or hanged.

When the Nazis required a quota of Jews to participate in forced labor, the Judenrat had the responsibility to meet this demand. Sometimes Jews could avoid forced labor by making a payment to the Judenrat. These payments supplemented the taxes which the Judenrat levied to finance the services provided in the ghettos.

Underground Jewish organizations sprang up in the ghettos to serve as alternatives to the Judenrat, some of which were established with a military component to organize resistance to the Nazis.

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Inside The Concentration Camps: Eyewitness

Accounts of Life in Hitler's Death Camps.

Ed. Eugene Aronson. Plager Publishers.
Connecticut. London, 1946.

Chapter 2

Deportation

DEPARTURE

"The trainload of prisoners carried between 1,000 and 1,200 persons—men, women, children, old people—of all classes and nationalities." (93)

"Among them were mothers carrying newborn babies, frail old people on stretchers, seriously wounded people, small children. An SS guard, who had been dispatched by car to an orphanage to bring back the children, returned without them saying that he just couldn't bring himself to do it. So the company commander sent another bus to get the children, and this one, after several trips, eventually brought back 350 orphans for deportation. Although the children were given thermos bottles, condensed milk, and bottled water at the beginning of the trip, most of them died along the way." (6)

"The SS stripped us completely naked and squeezed 140 persons into one boxcar. These were the famous WWI boxcars they said could hold 40 men or 8 horses. It was sheer hell." (51)

"The boxcars were thoroughly sealed." (20)

"We couldn't sit, we couldn't even crouch." (7)

"What I ended up doing was spending the night on one leg, since there wasn't enough room to stand on both." (69)

"In the middle of the car was a bucket that served as a chamber pot; in a few hours it was full to overflowing and gave off a terrible odor. After that, people had no choice but to relieve themselves directly on the floor, and that meant that we spent the trip enveloped in a poisonous stench.

"During the trip there were numerous attempts to escape. . . . These attempts were extremely dangerous and were not possible in most cars. We couldn't try anything because our car was next to that of the SS and

was constantly under surveillance. The main escape attempt took place during the second night while we were still in France. Someone managed to get a door open while someone else broke a window and pried loose the iron bars. When the SS discovered the attempt, the train was stopped and the hunt began, with help from search lights on nearby towers and from machine guns located at each end of the train. The SS poured forth from their cars in pursuit of the escapees and fired at them.

"The last car of the train, which had remained empty, was reserved for corpses. It contained not only the dead but also the wounded who were thrown in together with the dead. I saw this car again at Buchenwald and heard the moaning and groaning of the wounded. I know with absolute certainty that all of them were killed and thrown in the ovens along with those already dead." (7)

"These attempts to escape were cruelly suppressed." (50)

"In the cars from which the escape attempts took place, the prisoners were stripped naked and a great many of them were shot like criminals on the spot." (78)

"I witnessed executions being performed in a bomb crater just outside the boxcar." (30)

"A few young people were hastily selected. . . . We saw five of them approaching from among the first to be chosen; each was accompanied by a German policeman carrying a handgun. The moment they reached the ditch, a policeman would grab hold of a prisoner, stand him against the wall, and shoot him in the head." (69)

"Before they moved on, the comrades of those just killed would cover the bodies with a few shovelfuls of earth." (30)

"The trip took 8 to 10 days, during which we were given soup and bread only twice." (55)

"It took 10 days and 9 nights to complete the trip from Cherbourg to Hazebrouck (near the Belgian border)." (4)

"All of us were racked with thirst. I saw some of my comrades pushed to the point of drinking their own urine, others to licking the sweat off the backs of fellow prisoners, while still others tried to catch the occasional drops of water that condensed on the walls of the boxcar." (54)

"At the terminal in Bremen we were denied water by the German Red Cross, who told us that there was no water for us." (29)

"We were half dead from thirst. In Breslau we begged the nurses of the German Red Cross for water, but they remained deaf to our pleas. No water, stifling heat, no air (the vents were blocked)." (10)

"At every stop you could hear voices from the boxcars begging for air. Without fail a German officer would reply: 'You have everything you

beg the guards for help got either a bullet from a revolver or a burst from a machine gun for an answer." (92)

"Two comrades died of suffocation. I myself was busy until dawn taking care of my friend P. who had heart trouble." (69)

"By five o'clock we counted about 100 who had suffocated; after that the number mounted rapidly from minute to minute." (92)

"From every car there were reports of outbreaks of madness. Some of the prisoners had no choice but to silence others who had become either crazed or dangerous." (78)

"In one car there were horrifying cases of mass insanity in which the prisoners killed each other with excessive brutality." (92)

"I saw with my own eyes a shipment of prisoners who had all gone totally mad." (69)

"In one shipment 64 deportees arrived dead. They had all died of suffocation." (54)

"In my boxcar there were 82 dead out of 126 alive at departure. I have no doubt that similar conditions existed in other boxcars." (51)

"By the time we got to the camp, we counted 896 dead." (92)

"Of 1,200 French deportees, only 500 arrived alive." (51)

"My shipment, which started out with 2,500 prisoners, lost 912 along the way because of conditions that ranged from unspeakable to unbearable." (37)

ARRIVAL

"We arrived in the middle of a pitch black night. Visions of horror. Visions of terror. The most tormented hours of my imprisonment. Cries of wild animals, unholy howling. What was it all about? The reception by the jailers, accompanied by their huge, well-trained wolfhounds. We were so afraid our legs buckled. We knew we would never leave this place." (120)

"The boxcars were forced open and the SS guards stormed in. Shouting wildly, they prodded us with rifle butts and bayonets and beat us with clubs, then set the dogs loose on us. Those who fell and could not get up were ripped apart. I was wearing a large cape which the dogs sank their teeth into, forcing me to submit." (7)

"We had to unload the boxcars not just of the suitcases but also of the dead and the dying. The dead—and that included anybody who could not stand up—were tossed onto a pile. The suitcases and packages were gathered up and the boxcars were scrubbed down so that no trace remained of their hideous contents." (104)

"Right there by the train the SS killed most of the children. M. W.

"The French were shot down on the arrival platform by the SS." (71)
 "I saw one SS guard grab a child by the feet and throw it into the air while a cohort fired his pistol at this living target. Another SS guard yanked a baby from its mother's arms and tore it apart by putting his foot on one leg and pulling on the other." (23)

"An officer strode forward and announced an inspection. Everybody was ordered to undress, and then he asked for an accounting of the 'refuse.' By 'refuse' he meant the dead. There were 954." (20)

"One shipment included 800 corpses out of 2,500 deportees. To begin with, the deportees had had to cover nearly 80 kilometers on foot. Then they had been put into open trucks in which they traveled for eight days." (30)

"The most gruesome spectacle I witnessed was the arrival of shipment after shipment of prisoners, especially the one that came from Großkoyn. There were 3,000 prisoners at the outset, and they had been made to travel 60 kilometers on foot without a break, all the while deprived of food, and constantly beaten. Then they were loaded onto open trucks, 100 to a vehicle, and forced to crouch down in a huddle. The first to stand up got shot. They traveled this way for seven days and seven nights. They arrived with 700 dead and 700 so sick they died soon thereafter. The rest climbed down out of the train, and those who couldn't make it to the camp were shot." (31)

"The largest shipments of French deportees arrived at the camps in June and July of 1944. It was then I saw corpses I will never forget. The Nazi monsters had squeezed 100 to 140 people into each boxcar. I remember in my own case, where there were only 50 to a car, that we still could neither breathe nor move, and I wondered how people could survive under these circumstances. The people I now saw arriving had all died of asphyxiation. Their faces had turned black, and their lips were horribly swollen. There were several truckloads of corpses in this condition. To perform any burial rites was, of course, out of the question; these bodies had to be hauled to the ovens without delay. Sadly, they still had their civilian clothes on and were carrying photographs of their families with them. That was in July 1944, and the ovens were working night and day." (90)

"They separated the women, the children, and the old people from the rest of the deportees, and that was the last we ever heard of them. I think that my wife, who was among them, went with them to the gas chamber." (55)

"The prisoners filed past an SS guard who pointed out the direction they were to take: to the left, men between 20 and 45 and young women—in short, those who could work; to the right, the rest of the prisoners, older women, children, the elderly, the sick, the 'unusable'—the 'wasteful mouths.'" (20)

"As we were led from the railway station to the camp, we were beaten with clubs and menaced by dogs." (71)

"In spite of our weakness we had to travel the five kilometers from the station to the camp on foot." (50)

"The SS guards had stolen our shoes back at the border, the moment we were across, so we had to hike barefoot through the snow and the filth." (123)

"With hammer blows to our backs and sharp kicks in the shins, these animals ordered us to march swiftly but silently. No lagging, no infirmity was tolerated. My comrades, already fatigued from the weight of their suitcases, lived in mortal fear of these twin gangs: the SS and their dogs." (120)

"Most of the prisoners were not capable of going on. All those who couldn't keep up were left by the roadside, and we never saw them again. I can testify to this with absolute certainty because I worked in the hospital. Everything points to the fact that they were killed." (79)

"The distance had to be covered running; the old who could not run fell behind and were finished off with clubs." (7)

"A few days later 700 Russians arrived in the same condition as their predecessors. They were famished and looked like wild animals. They were guarded by German soldiers who would shoot at the slightest provocation." (125)

"A shipment of Jews from Budapest, who had traveled the whole way on foot through the snow, arrived at the camp. Since they had had nothing to eat or drink for a week, they had eaten snow. Upon their arrival, they were ordered not to sit down, and we other prisoners were told to move closer to them. From time to time one of them would keel over dead. Behind this convoy came the dump trucks on which several hundred frozen bodies were piled. Unloading them was like unloading iron posts." (19)

"Thousands of these poor creatures, driven forward by the SS men and their dogs, died from exhaustion or were shot down like animals in the street and left to die in the snow." (71)

"Before we entered the camp, there was an examination of the prisoners who had been added to our shipment. Each prisoner was summoned and had to give his name. If he pronounced his name in French and the Germans couldn't understand it, he received a blow with a rubber truncheon. Once, an SS guard about 17 from Transylvania beat the new arrivals unmercifully on the back with two rubber truncheons." (86)

"In the doorways and hallways, eager young SS guards were positioned to strike the new arrivals with their fists or rifle butts or kick them with their boots. In a sort of anteroom there were 20

prisoners with their faces pressed motionless against the wall. With curses and blows the new arrivals (French, Russian, Polish, Belgian, German, etc.) were made to understand that they would be treated like these poor 20 if they turned their heads or as much as moved a finger. But regardless of how obedient they were, most of them were beaten anyway without having any idea why. From time to time someone would call out, 'Next.' Since most of prisoners didn't understand German, nobody moved. Those who were supposed to step forth would then be viciously beaten. Many fell down and were kicked. The torture continued inside the office. . . . I was more dead than alive when it came my turn to go inside." (27)

"Two huge guards beat the arriving prisoners with leather thongs." (58)

"For my part, I got three teeth knocked out and a split lip, courtesy of an SS officer. They hit us the from the moment we arrived at the camp." (75)

"As the number of overseers increased, the abuse increased along with it. They competed to see who could hit the hardest and punch the most savagely." (120)

"It was almost dark. We had to march in rows of three and in lock step to cover the 100 yards to our barracks. We were surrounded by SS guards. Anyone who did not march in step or got a little out of line or turned his head was either kicked or struck with the barrel of a gun. When we got to our barracks, we were ordered to go to cell 4. Then, accompanied by punishing blows, they pointed out our cells, none of which had a number." (27)

"Young girls were whipped. They received 30 lashes on their backsides. This was carried out in the presence of the camp Kommandant, a doctor, and the chief overseer." (120)

Chapter 3

Internment

RECEPTION

"The moment we set foot inside the camp we were given a tattoo on the left forearm." (20)

"I was branded with a red-hot iron." (89)

"We were no longer a personality; we were just a number." (120)

"The children, even the infants, were tattooed. When the Russians liberated the camp, they found a two-week-old baby with a number tattooed on its arm." (86)

"To be 'disinfected,' we had to take all our clothes off. Our ears and other body parts were inspected to see if we were hiding anything. Then we moved to another room where all our hair was shaved off with electric razors and shearing machines." (7)

"No hairy part of the body escaped the razor." (54)

"We looked on helplessly as women lost their hair to the shearing machine." (120)

"In general, 7 out of 10 women were shorn; we had no idea how that number was established." (41)

"Of the 964 women in our group, approximately 600 were shorn. It seemed to be done arbitrarily, without a system." (28)

"As they sheared us, they gave us soothing assurances: 'Animal fabrics are warmer than vegetable fabrics. Therefore, calm yourselves, nothing is wasted, German industry utilizes everything. With your hair we'll make blankets, clothing for the SS, etc.' Actually, while we had nothing to put on, the dogs of the SS wore coats (with the SS monogram) that often had been made from our hair." (72)

"Next we were herded into a shower room where we were immersed in a huge tub filled with a phenol solution. The very sick died as they were lifted from the tub because the procedure was very agonizing. Others lost consciousness and could no longer stand." (77)

"I saw one old Frenchman whose comrades had lifted him from the boxcar and escorted him through the disrobing to the shearing and then finally to the shower room. There two Nazi thugs beat him up. Then one grabbed him by the shoulder, the other by the feet, and they tossed him into the tub where he died. Then they threw him in a corner." (62)

"Brutally they shoved us [women] into a room adjacent to the showers. There, five at a time, we were 'thoroughly' searched. I emphasize 'thoroughly' because even our vaginas were carefully inspected. The SS matrons took turns conducting this inspection, moving from one prisoner to the other, without ever washing their hands, and with no regard for the young girls, all this in the presence of the SS guards and their dogs, which lunged at the naked prisoners if they so much as stirred." (120)

"The Germans made up a chart for each of us and entered nonexistent illnesses on it. I, for example, was listed as having lung and heart problems when even today, after so much suffering (typhus, double pneumonia, etc.), the examination I recently underwent revealed that my lungs are completely sound, while the weakness in my heart is a result of the treatment I received during four and a half years imprisonment, two of them in Germany itself. The Germans arranged it so that any death could appear to be the result of natural causes." (72)

"They took our civilian clothes and all of our personal possessions. Nothing was to remind us of our homes." (120)

"Then we were given rags to wear (which gave them an opportunity to steal our clothes) and a pair of wooden sandals with only a simple strap over the toes to hold them on with. This forced the wearers to lift their feet high with every step.

"The camp was particularly overcrowded at those times when new shipments of prisoners arrived. There was literally no room to receive the new arrivals. Sometimes the prisoners had to wait two or three days before space could be found in the barracks. During this time they remained out-of-doors without food because they didn't officially belong to the camp as long as they had not yet been assigned to a barracks. The result of such waiting was that many prisoners came down with pneumonia, bronchitis, etc." (54)

"We slept for ten days on wet earth, without blankets, without straw, and naturally without fire. In November 1939, after the war in Poland, somewhere around 2,000 Polish prisoners of war arrived at the camp. Under the pretext of delousing they had to undress in the freezing cold and were then crowded together in a cramped barbed-wire enclosure; their clothes were burnt. For food they received a tenth of a loaf of bread per day. At the end of three weeks only ten of them were left. All the rest had died of cold and hunger." (106)

THEIEVERY

"Dutch and French Jews said the Germans had told them they were leaving their homelands in order to be taken to Poland where they could continue to work at their professions, and that they would be compensated for every business, every enterprise, every factory confiscated by the Germans. They were to take along their prize possessions and enough cash to last them at least six weeks. Consequently, a considerable amount of money and valuables ended up in the camp." (104)

"They took our money from us and all our jewelry." (125)

"The SS and the Gestapo oversaw all operations." (20)

"While these various operations were in progress, I saw the guards brazenly stuffing their pockets with valuables and money.

"Driven by avarice and greed, leading personalities in the party, both junior and senior officers, repeatedly filled their pockets with jewelry, gems, bearer bonds, and foreign currency.

"I could not bring myself to hand over my wedding ring, so, right after I was captured, I swallowed it. I did this two more times." (57)

"Along the way a young SS guard, about 20, approached me and said to me in French: 'Give me your wedding ring.' I didn't answer. He hit me hard, and then for the next five kilometers he kept prodding me on the back and shoulders with the barrel of his gun. After five kilometers I passed out. With his feet he rolled me into a ditch, and as I came to, he tried to remove the ring with the blade of his knife. He finally succeeded in removing it after he had spit on my finger in order to get the ring off. With more blows he forced me to my feet and pushed me into the back row." (88)

"The exact number of gold teeth each prisoner possessed was carefully recorded in a register." (65)

"They pulled out the teeth of the prisoners in their search for diamonds, claiming that they could easily be concealed in a hollow tooth. They also extracted crowns, but they didn't record these extractions in the register." (110)

"They used tongs to pull out all my gold teeth." (89)

"The Germans urged us to write to our families and include a printed notice advertising the existence of a canteen and stating that we were allowed to receive money orders so that we could buy things in this canteen. Naturally the canteen did not exist." (58)

"They never gave me back the money they had taken out of my billfold; nor did they give me the money my wife sent me—25 marks a month for 4 months. I discovered upon my return to Paris that the Gestapo, who had arrested me in my apartment on August 15, 1942, had also taken the sum of 225,000 francs in banknotes from my desk along

with 180,000 francs in treasury bills." (31)

"For special jobs the camp tormentors used prisoners, usually volunteers, like, for example, a certain young Luxemburger whose specialty was searching for jewelry in the vaginas of dead women." (55)

"The name 'Canada' was given to a camp organization which employed 1,200 men and 2,000 women. There, materials of all kinds taken from the trainloads of prisoners were sorted, packed, and shipped to Germany: clothing, food, medications, toilet articles, jewelry, pictures, underclothes, tobacco, cigarettes, bedding, and human hair. Within this organization the Germans had trained a group of specialists to scrounge among the clothes and bedding for gems and other valuables that the owners might have overlooked." (31)

"All the stuff stolen from the prisoners was carefully organized and shipped to Germany. In the gigantic shoe warehouse in Camp #6 there were shoes with labels from Paris, Vienna, Brussels, Warsaw, Trieste, Prague, Riga, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Kiev, Krakow, Lublin, Lvov, and other cities; shoes of every size and style, for men, women, young people, small children, combat boots, ordinary boots, farm boots. In addition, the warehouse also contained a huge number of shoemaking materials (soles, insoles, heels), that had been selected, sorted into piles, and made ready for shipment to Germany.

"In this death camp alone there were hundreds of thousands of shoes that had once belonged to men, women, and children who had been tortured and killed.

"In the big Gestapo camp on Chopin Street in Lublin there were huge quantities of men's, women's and children's underclothes as well as all sorts of personal belongings. For example, there were drawers full of balls of yarn, thousands of eyeglasses, tens of thousands of men's, women's, and children's shoes, tens of thousands of neckties with labels from various cities: Paris, Prague, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels—thousands of women's corsets; a portion of these had been sorted out and made ready for shipment. Robes, pajamas, slippers, toys, milk bottles, shaving sticks, scissors, knives, and a large variety of household items. Among the spoils there was also a mountain of suitcases that had once been the property of citizens of Russia, Poland, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Norway, and Denmark.

"SS Colonel Ternes declared, in his capacity as former camp finance director: 'As for me, I know that the money and valuables taken from the prisoners were sent to Berlin. The gold taken from the prisoners was shipped according to weight. All these stolen valuables amassed significant revenue for the German Reich. Considerable quantities of gold and valuables were sent to Berlin. I know all this firsthand because I worked in the camp as director of finance. I know for a fact

that large quantities of gold and valuables were not listed on the incoming invoice because they had been stolen by the Germans who confiscated them.'" (111)

CLOTHING

"The clothing was totally inadequate. From time to time we were inspected, and any clothes we had other than the prescribed official 'uniform' were taken away. Some prisoners might trade two or three days' food rations for a sweater only to have it confiscated, along with anything else that wasn't permitted, including even the paper clothing many prisoners wrapped themselves in to protect themselves from the cold. Personal garments were removed from the old, the sick, and the crippled. Coats were forbidden; jackets and shirts alone were allowed." (73)

"We were paralyzed with cold in the morning, for even at this time of year, we were not allowed to wear a garment made of wool." (120)

"In rainstorms we were completely soaked and our coarse wool clothes weighed us down to the point where we could no longer wear them. They added several kilos which the women were unable to sustain. We were forced to stop and wring them out all day long because we had no fire to dry them by." (67)

"The wooden shoes we had been issued caused inflammation that, because it went unattended, often resulted in death." (86)

HOUSING

"50 wooden barracks and 20 concrete buildings for 16,000 people—that was the reality of a concentration camp." (69)

"All of these buildings were constructed according to a master plan. Each unit was approximately 100 feet long and 25 to 30 feet wide. Although the walls were scarcely six feet high, the roof rose another 15 feet to a height, at its peak, of 22 feet. The room was divided into two parts by a partition. Along the outside walls and the walls of the partition were three levels of narrow cells. Normally three persons lived in each cell. These cells were so narrow there was scarcely enough room to lie down, let alone sit up or stand up. In this way between 400 and 500 persons were 'accommodated,' as they put it." (104)

"There were 750 of us in one barracks that was 150 feet long and 30 feet wide, with 12-foot-high walls halfway up the sides, sloping to a 20-foot-high peak at the top of the ceiling. By April 4, 1945, the number of prisoners reached 1,350. Inside however there was room for

only 936 persons to lie down, which meant that you were lucky to sleep two nights out of three. Those who couldn't lie down remained sitting on benches or standing. In some barracks the overcrowding was even worse, and I was told that on many nights as many as 2,100 persons were crammed into a single barracks." (80)

"It was virtually impossible to breathe in this air." (7)

"When we arrived, the sleeping accommodations appeared to be quite nice; the beds had been neatly made, and on each straw mattress there was a small, blue-white coverlet that was almost pretty. But unfortunately our contentment did not last long. When we turned down the corner of the coverlet, we saw that the mattresses and covers were crawling with vermin. My blanket was filthy." (28)

"We slept on mattresses that were filled with sawdust." (60)

"There were 10, 11, even 12 of us in a cell 12 feet long, 6 feet long, and about 5 feet high. The head of every prisoner pressed against the feet of his neighbor." (80)

"There was not enough room to sleep on one's back." (7)

"During the night, whenever you wanted to turn, you had to poke your comrades so that you could all turn at the same time. We lay like sardines, crosswise and flattened on our sides." (59)

"The women no longer menstruated. Of ten suffering women you could be sure that nine had dry ovaries, because the Nazis would not let them sleep stretched out. There were between 1,200 and 1,300 of them." (57)

"The women slept in the latrines and even out-of-doors, sometimes at temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero." (9)

"The camp could accommodate between 25,000 and 40,000 people. There were times when the number of prisoners was as high as 45,000. The number of internees in this camp was not exceptional.

"The prisoners of war in the camp included members of the former Polish army, who had first been taken captive in 1939, plus prisoners from Russia, Poland, France, Belgium, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Norway, and other countries." (111)

FOOD

"Nutrition was at a lower than subsistence level." (80)

"Not enough to stay alive on and too much to die from." (23)

"At 7 in the morning 'coffee' was distributed: dirty water that came from melted snow; that was it." (125)

"The meals were anything but good: nettle leaves, cabbage, and beet roots, a few potatoes, a piece of bread with something that vaguely resembled marmalade or an ersatz cream cheese; that was it." (50)

"The bread consisted of 40 percent potato flour, 25 percent chestnut

flour, 20 to 25 percent barley flour, and the rest was sawdust." (29)

"Bread rations were unpredictable; they fluctuated between 150 and 250 grams. That was very disconcerting for us since we never knew how much we would get to eat. The food was disgusting." (61)

"Even in the soup there were rotten vegetables that caused frequent outbreaks of dysentery." (14)

"Frequently the soup served to the internees was mixed with a chemical that caused dysentery and hemorrhaging. All medications were ineffective." (38)

"Dinner was often cold because it had been brought to the barracks at four o'clock while roll call might last until six o'clock or later." (60)

"The soup would stand outside so long it would turn into a block of ice. Only then was it distributed." (38)

"We were not allowed to have knives, and at one point they also took away our spoons. We were forced to slurp our soup." (12)

"One prisoner had a plate, another a gas mask canister, another a rusty tin can. Everybody ate out of makeshift utensils." (125)

"Every parcel sent to us was confiscated and we were given only the empty boxes." (11)

"During the four months I spent there, we received nothing from the Red Cross." (76)

"No package ever got into the hands of the prisoners." (83)

"I saw packages arriving from the French Red Cross marked 'For the Steward of the French Internees.' The SS guards explained to us that these so-called 'stewards' did not exist and, therefore, they could dispose of the packages as they wished, which is what they did." (98)

"All of our packages were regularly stolen. We saw the head matron eating some things from France and we knew where they came from. In the garbage bins we found the empty sardine cans and the wrappings from the little rectangular cookies made back home." (28)

"Before our very eyes the women officers sold the civilian factory workers packages of food that had been confiscated from our rations." (12)

"Theoretically the prisoners received the above-stated rations, but in reality most of them were stolen before they ever could be distributed." (104)

"Furthermore, a considerable amount of coffee, soup, or breakfast got wasted because we had to eat on the double while trying to avoid the guards who stood along the way and kept us moving with blows from their clubs and their boots. This wasn't too hard for the young people who were athletic enough to avoid these obstacles along the way, but there were old people and crippled people to whom the same regulations applied. The raw brutality of this barbarian horde was unleashed on these hapless victims." (27)

"In order to get our meals, we had to stand in line while blows from clubs rained down on our heads. They ladled out this 'boiled water' in such large amounts that we could not carry our bowls without spilling their contents; and we were not allowed to slow down but had to keep running, which meant more blows to our ribs and almost nothing left in our bowls." (74)

"The soup and the 'coffee' were distributed in 50-liter vats. These vats, which were a lot like those used by the French army, weighed 60 pounds empty and 100 pounds full, not counting the lid.

"Seven pots were required for the morning or evening brew; fourteen for the soup. These pots were hard to handle; two or four persons could carry them but only with difficulty because you had to be careful not to burn yourself since the pots had no lids. The poor women who had to lug these pots tried hard to walk in step in order to keep the sloshing to a minimum and not burn themselves, but it was very hard, all the more so because the way back was quite far (the farthest barracks being a good mile from the kitchen) and the street was dirty and slippery and full of holes, so that in many places they sank to their knees in filth. It was sheer torture. If they slowed their step, the SS guards would use their clubs to prod them forward. Used to suffering, most of them pushed themselves to the limit, but their physical condition could not match their attempt to be brave. Many would faint, either from fatigue or because of the beatings. Then the pots would overturn and the soup would spill out, which was just what the Germans wanted. Since the contents were not replaced, all the prisoners suffered because all of them had to take the blame, and so each individual ration was reduced. This incident was repeated frequently. Thus the already insufficient rations, which were constantly being reduced anyway, were reduced even more." (57)

"It was extremely difficult to receive even a spoonful of soup. Of the many prisoners who tried, only a fraction succeeded. The others were kicked and beaten." (12)

"To get any food, we had to stand outside in the rain and cold, sometimes for an hour and a half, for the distribution." (28)

"To get any soup, we had to obey the officers who ordered us to line up 500 feet from the distribution point and then crawl the whole distance. When we got there, they ordered us to run back to the line and then hop all the way forward again while they kept beating us. If we were lucky enough to get any soup, we didn't know where we were supposed to go eat it. Some of us just stood in the hallways, others went into the latrines." (12)

"The first time I went to get my soup, I had to crawl on my hands and knees even though my physical condition was extremely weak." (88)

"During the distribution of food the following scenes occurred daily:

If the line got too close to the distributor, the head guard would 'distribute' blows, usually with a large cane or club without watching where he was hitting. If the line got too far away from the distributor, a similar scene was enacted for the opposite reason. If, for example, a new arrival happened to stick his head out of the line a little to see what he was supposed to do to get his ration, that, too, was a reason to be beaten. Usually the ever vigilant overseer would grab the offender by the hair and pound his head against the barracks wall, kick him, and send him away without food." (27)

"As a result of overcrowding, the already inadequate food rations came to a halt and we got only soup once a day." (53)

"It was often the case that for days on end the internees would be given nothing to eat or would receive only a fraction of the rations that were rightfully coming to them." (106)

"The children were constantly tormented by hunger. No sooner was the distribution over than we had but one desire: food. We were not allowed to eat during roll call. If it is hard enough for a grown up to resist the temptation to eat when he is hungry and holding a piece of bread in his hand, then it has to be torture for a child. An SS woman kept a sharp lookout, and every three or four days she would catch some poor kids eating. Immediately the culprits would be dragged before the group, their food would be taken away for the whole day, and they would be punished in the following way: They had to kneel down in a line with their faces to the sun, a large rock on their heads, their arms raised, and in each hand a brick or cobblestone. They had to remain in this position until the end of roll call, sometimes two or three hours, or until they were exhausted." (57)

"We couldn't sleep because we were so hungry." (103)

"Starving, we scrounged around in the garbage for cabbage roots which, for us, were a real find. To illustrate what lengths we were driven to by our hunger: One day we women were sent out to plow under a field of rape seed; instead, we ate the plants. After we finished, you would have thought a swarm of grasshoppers had stripped the field clean." (28)

"The inmates ate grass, just as it grew." (67)

"We were so weak when we were finally freed from this hell that many of us still died from hunger and exhaustion." (40)

"The American doctors attested to the fact that the bodies of the adults weighed only 60 to 80 pounds. In most cases they had lost 50 to 60 percent of their normal weight and even their size." (106)

"Whenever an autopsy was performed, there was atrophy of the heart muscles, shrinking and yellowing of the liver, and an absence of mucous membranes in the stomach and intestines.

"The intestines of the prisoners suffering diarrhoea—known

also as 'flux'—were the thickness of cigarette paper. In contrast to what went on in other camps, the dysentery bacillus had not taken hold here; therefore, it followed, that the camp 'flux' was the result of a lack of food high in protein (egg whites, eggs, red meat, etc.)." (86)

"The effects of this diet were scientifically monitored. Each new arrival was weighed in order to ascertain the average weight of all the prisoners. After a certain period of time, they were weighed again in order to gauge the extent of their emaciation. Then a regular report, written according to specific regulations, would be sent to the authorities comparing the average weight loss of the new prisoners to the average weight loss of the rest of the camp." (65)

"The meager rations given to the prisoners caused them to die from malnutrition. We found out that in a camp nearby, people were often disposed of in this way." (31)

"Prisoners were regularly starved to death; numerous cases of exhaustion and death occurred because of debilitation. They fed on offal, they ate cats and dogs. Most of the internees were nothing but walking skeletons, mere skin and bones, or else they were grossly fat because of the swelling brought on by hunger.

"Mr. M., a professor at the Collège de France, was literally starved to death. I saw how he tried to join a group that was washing dishes just so he could try to get some food by scraping the edge of the bowls with his fingers." (47)

"One Frenchman, who had once lived near the 'Place de la République,' a former member of the Foreign Legion, father of two children, a wounded veteran with many scars on his body, died of hunger." (98)

"Incidents of cannibalism were not unheard of." (90)

"The misery of the prisoners was so great that many of the corpses were chopped into pieces and the pieces cooked and eaten. I saw that with my own eyes. I also saw bodies that were missing a chunk of thigh, or a heart, or even testicles (a particular favorite)." (63)

HYGIENE

"No showers, very little water." (125)

"Since we slept in our clothes, we had to undress with lightning speed if we wanted to wash up because once that door opened, God help those who did not appear naked immediately in front of the spigot. And God help those who after half a minute had not run back inside their cells. If an internee got only three lashes in this time period, he could consider himself lucky. Under these conditions it was not possible to wash

more than your face." (38)

"The water was dirty; in general there was only one spigot for up to 10,000 women. To get water you had to stand in the snow or a puddle of water." (14)

"1,400 people had to wash in a room big enough for at most 60 persons, and all the washing had to be done in an hour, which was simply impossible. As a consequence, most prisoners didn't even try to wash. One overseer stationed at the door speeded up the washing with a rubber truncheon." (86)

"At the baths two German prisoners convicted of multiple thefts and murders began beating up on us as we jumped into the tank. Some of my comrades were quick enough to escape with only a few blows. Others, however, were unable to reach the edge of the tank before their brains were already oozing out of their skulls." (101)

"It was the middle of August, and we didn't have any drinking water. We were given water only for washing dishes, but we used it for drinking anyway—and at those times when the women absolutely had to have it for reasons of personal hygiene. We would give them a quarter liter of water that we had pilfered." (42)

"For feminine hygiene there was, of course, no warm water, no soap, no sanitary napkins, only dirty rags." (125)

"One day the German matrons who guarded us noticed that in the afternoon we still had some water left and that we were holding back a bit of soup for the children's supper. They immediately took it all away from us." (24)

"The women helped each other bring water from the far end of the camp. On a bitter cold evening, they would carry buckets of water to wash themselves with. Dead tired from work, stuck in a wretched camp, cooped up in filthy barracks without light, without heat, forced to sleep on straw, like dogs." (125)

"Most of the prisoners got only polluted water in the latrine; they came down with dysentery, and many of them died from typhus." (63)

"The toilet consisted of 12 wooden buckets set up at the entrance to the barracks. To think that these could serve the needs of 700 people was absolutely ridiculous. The overflow from these improvised toilets ran down the length of the barracks and onto the planks on which the prisoners slept." (83)

"In Birkenau the toilet was on boards above a ditch." (43)

"In the field the toilets were out in the open." (60)

"Awful things occurred in the latrines. Sometimes a woman would have a miscarriage, then wrap the newborn in paper and throw it in the ditch." (125)

"Right after breakfast all the inmates would be assembled and led in

day. Women who were caught urinating in the vicinity of the barracks were punished with 10 to 25 blows depending on their physical condition. Often we saw how these poor creatures would be beaten so badly for this offense by the SS matrons that a few hours later they would be dead." (57)

"If dysentery forced you to get up at night, it was usually impossible to make it to the latrine in time. Naturally, the camp was covered with excrement, and when a woman could no longer reach the latrine and was surprised by a guard or an overseer, that meant a terrible beating." (10)

"The barracks were full of fleas." (7)

"The overflow forced us to lie four or five to a straw mattress, and it was impossible under these conditions to get rid of the vermin. It was also impossible to wash in a room 12 feet long and nine feet wide with 12 spigots for 500 people when we were given only half an hour.

"I hadn't changed clothes for four months, and my clothes were finally falling off me in rags. Since we killed between 100 and 200 lice per day, their juices stained our clothes red, brown, and black and caused them to stiffen when dry. One time a prisoner, who had not been able to wash his shirt, took it off and let it stand by itself." (88)

"Because of this total lack of hygiene, we became prey to all manner of vermin. The nights, which were short enough as it was, were interrupted by the bites of fleas and bedbugs; body lice and head lice were our constant daily companions. There were so many of them that we couldn't shake them off." (37)

"If a woman finally succeeded in ridding herself of lice, she would turn around only to face the same nuisance from the vermin-infested blankets. One night I was given a blanket and within an hour I was infested with thousands of lice." (67)

"One day they decided to delouse us. All the women and children had to undress completely. They smeared a pomade on all the hairy parts of our bodies and then everyone in the barracks was crowded together and made to sleep on the bare floor. In the night the dogs were let loose and countless women and children were bitten. Whoever wanted to escape the bites had to climb up on the wardrobes. After two days and a night spent like this, we had to endure a roll call during which we were forced to stand naked for two hours in a snowstorm before we could return to the barracks. When we finally got back to the barracks, we found that the covers of the straw mattresses, along with the blankets, had been taken away, and we had to sleep on putrid straw and sawdust in which lice existed in sickening profusion." (72)

"In order to be allowed a few hours sleep you had to completely disrobe, in spite of the weather, and be deloused. Those who lacked the strength or were too worn out to care were soon covered with suppu-

rating wounds. A few of my comrades didn't undress for months." (83)
 "Eventually, you learn to suffer all kinds of torment: open sores, skin rashes, unbearable pain, etc." (120)

"Many women had skin rashes and dirty black blisters. Others had large pimples. Most had sores on their feet from the constant marching and the continuous work; they were crawling with vermin, their hair was chopped off, and they were forever scratching themselves. The Germans did not touch them, nor did they come any nearer than five yards when they wanted to speak to them. . . ." (125)

"Fleas, bedbugs, and lice were everywhere—spreading typhus." (60)

Chapter 5

Life in the Camps

DISCIPLINE

"The one word that best describes camp life is 'monotony.' Everywhere we turned, we came up against the so-called Kapos (relapsed German criminals) who were armed with rubber truncheons." (101)

"Blows to the head and beatings were daily occurrences that no one looked upon as anything out of the ordinary." (122)

"Even the sick were kicked and beaten." (59)

"The treatment was the same for all, the French as well as the Germans and other nationalities." (17)

"Orders were given only in German. Those of us who did not understand German and could not immediately respond to the orders were kicked, slapped, and so on." (44)

"In a 10- to 14-day period, I received a total of 175 canings on the buttocks. During this same time, I was forced to hang by my wrists once a day for 25 minutes." (38)

"Often you would see maybe 30 prisoners who had been beaten with rubber hoses and who had sustained anywhere from 50 to 70 bruises." (82)

"One SS guard would use anything he could lay his hands on—a rubber truncheon, a shovel, whatever—to beat any prisoners who came near him, for no reason whatsoever. When columns were formed, he would amuse himself by behaving like a madman, kicking and beating those unfortunate enough to be in his way. We called him 'the Cudgel' because he always carried a club with him with which he randomly attacked the prisoners." (4)

"Another SS guard took a particular pleasure in herding the prisoners out of their cells and making them kneel until their heads touched the ground. Then he would stomp on their heads with his iron-heeled boots

until blood gushed from their noses and ears." (38)

"One unit leader was totally crazy. He ranted and raved for no reason at all. He'd make the prisoners stand at attention before him and then give them a kick in the stomach." (30)

"He'd throw men in the mud, then let them crawl out, only to throw them in again. He did it to add variety to the routine blows to the head, the genitals, the stomach, etc." (39)

"Even age didn't count, except as a sign of weakness, something that only invited beatings. Because he had the audacity to sit down on his straw pallet, General B. de F., who was 80, was beaten unconscious.

"When the camp commander detected any violation of camp discipline, he would torture us with senseless and malicious punishments which he called 'sport.' For up to an hour we were forced to run around the camp, sometimes crawling, sometimes huddled together, while Germans, wearing bright green and red, randomly beat us with canes.

"I saw many people die from this 'sport' event; I also saw many comrades die from the beatings. During 1943 this 'sport' took place every other day." (83)

"During our stay in Auschwitz, 40 to 50 prisoners were killed for leaving the barracks during restricted periods." (71)

PRACTICES

"We women were not allowed to choose where we wanted to sleep; it was chosen for us. So we were mixed in with common criminals all of whom were mean and nasty." (12)

"We were in close contact with the most despicable, most dangerous people, all indiscriminately thrown together." (120)

"Furthermore, our women officers, some with peculiar propensities, had no qualms whatsoever about taking their pleasure with Gypsy women, who then received special treatment." (12)

"If they were pretty and healthy, the women and young girls were taken to a special barracks where the SS guards raped them until they were half dead. From there they were sent to the ovens." (101)

"There was a brothel that was reserved for prisoners who had been in the camp three years. To be admitted you had to have a permit from the camp doctor. The house was open only in the evening after roll call. An SS guard manned the entrance. In the morning the prostitutes, dressed in shorts, would perform military exercises while singing songs. In the evening a few select women would show up at the barracks of the SS." (17)

"A admission was 2 marks, of which the woman got 50 pfennigs. The rest (1 50 Reichmarks) went to organizations working for victory." (90)

"A certain number of Jews were retained in the camp for the use of the Kapos; the homosexual Kapos used them to gratify their lust and therefore protected them." (86)

RELIGION

"No kind of spiritual or moral support was allowed for the followers of any religion." (92)

"The presence of a priest would have done us much good, but it was strictly forbidden under threat of death for a priest to perform his office." (57)

"In all concentration camps every religious practice was forbidden under penalty of death.

"The overriding principle was to suppress anything that could remotely provoke thoughts of God; so under the pretext of disinfecting us, they confiscated our rosaries, which they threw in the trash, and also our holy pictures and medallions, many of which were keepsakes. Breviaries, missals, and other holy books were used for toilet paper." (90)

"I wanted to save a small holy picture, but one of the prisoners advised me not to try. He said it wasn't worth it, that they would only make fun of you and, in the end, take it away from you anyway." (104)

"I was accosted by a group of SS men who tore my soutane, broke my rosary, and with scornful sneers stomped on my breviary." (40)

"In our group were nuns whose clothes the Germans had gleefully thrown in the dirt." (85)

"Priestly clothes and accessories were turned into clothes for the prostitutes in the brothels.

"Since I was a priest and an Englishman, I was given additional work to do which consisted of scooping water out of a hole with a pail. I never succeeded in emptying the hole because it kept filling up again. I endured some bad moments. However, I was spared beatings and the hardest work, excavation.

"To find out if the faithful were saying their prayers, the SS relied on the Kapos. A professor of Oriental languages (Hebrew, Armenian, and Arabic) was killed by an orderly who heard him praying.

"One day several priests arrived at Auschwitz without registration numbers. They were disinfected and then quarantined. The next day, still wearing their soutanes, they were sent out to work at the railway station under the command of the head Kapo, who killed them before nightfall.

"In the summer of 1944 I did a postmortem on the leading Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of the Balkans." (11)

him mercilessly.

"Among the new arrivals was a young Frenchman who had been wounded in an air raid and was suffering from shell shock. He wanted to explain his case to someone and to let them know that he had been mistakenly locked up. Without a second thought B. started hitting him on the head. To protect himself from the blows, the young man held his arms in front of his face. B. struck him over and over again until the young man was bleeding so freely from his nose and his mouth that the blood spilled onto the floor. B. hit so hard and so often that the whole time I was there (9 weeks), his hands were greatly swollen and bandaged." (27)

"When a certain SS guard appeared in the streets of the camp, every internee warned his neighbor and they would all run and hide. He was a pervert who killed people for pleasure. The most likely to suffer were the Jews whom he especially hated. As soon as he found out that somewhere there would be a lot of them—for example, if he got a list of the new arrivals—he would hurry there and kill a bunch of them. He was also a sex maniac who satisfied his lust with young Jewish girls, whom he murdered immediately afterwards." (90)

"SS Officer H. became enraged at me one day and hit me repeatedly in the face, but I stood motionless before him.

"Shame on you, striking an unarmed man," I said. "There is no heroism in attacking a man who has no weapon."

"H. became even more infuriated and screamed: 'I am a German and you are only a pig Jew, and you dare to tell me to my face that I ought to be ashamed?'

"The more he screamed, the higher his voice got. He spied a board in front of him, took it, threw it at me, hitting me in the head with it. I fell to the floor, my head gushing blood.

"Shame, shame on all of you," I cried. "The more you hit me, the greater is your shame."

"I felt that the end was near. He hit me again. Nothing could save me. Suddenly the board dropped from his hands. He flung himself at me and went on beating me on the head.

"I made it back to camp with a great deal of effort and went as soon as I could to the office of Gauleiter B. to complain about H. B. was one of the few 'mortal enemies' who was not malicious. He felt sorry for me but admitted that it would be impossible for him to act on my complaint and lodge an official reprimand against H., for H. had an important position in the Nazi party and, therefore, more influence than B., who, although a Gauleiter, was not a member of the party. I had no choice but to back off.

"Fifteen minutes later Camp Commander U. came for me personally

happen in the next few moments. The captain of the guards also entered the room.

"U. began without hesitation: 'You have had the impudence to complain about H. You should know first of all that complaints are supposed to be sent to me. Furthermore, you should know that I pay no attention whatsoever to the complaints of a Jew. Jews have done so much evil that all of them should be hanged without delay. Every piece of bread they are given is too much; it is stealing from the German people. And now for my answer.' With that, he came at me and began hitting me in the face until I fell to the floor.

"With great effort I stood up, but now it was the captain of the guards' turn to rough me up. He knocked me to the floor with a hammer blow to the head, screaming: 'Now, you Schweinehund, you pig Jew, you piece of filth, you won't be insulting any more Germans, not if you think back on this day.'" (34)

"In order to acquaint us with camp discipline, they assembled us (old and new we numbered about 15,000) in the place where two prisoners were being hanged to the sound of music." (58)

"One real Nazi fanatic took a shot at every prisoner he saw on the street simply for the fun of doing it. There was nothing to be done about him because he was the liaison officer, and he defended his actions on the grounds that, since the prisoner was trying to escape, he had squelched resistance and put himself in great danger doing it. In this way he managed to kill thousands of prisoners." (90)

"A 'green' German prisoner, who held the office of foreman in the mines, had established relations with a German woman who also worked in the mines. He wrote to this woman, and she wrote back. One day a letter fell into the hands of S. That evening at roll call he told the foreman to step forward and said to him: 'Ah, you are drunk with love; I will empty you out.' The man had to strip naked and run around the parade ground, stopping every 50 yards to masturbate at gunpoint.

"A load of prisoners arrived from Fresnes made up of Jews and Englishmen. Upon their arrival, the Jews were forced to wade fully clothed through a trough filled with water five feet deep. To 'dry off,' they were ordered to empty the latrine using only a wheelbarrow and a spoon.

"We were told that at the slightest hint of discontent, machine guns would open fire on us immediately. At the same time, the camp leader made a high-minded speech in which he told us that if we were surprised to be in our present situation, we had only the Jews to blame." (17)

"We watched as some prisoners were tied hand and foot and forced to hop around the basin. The SS guards struck the ones who couldn't hop

"In the morning we performed these exercises for up to four hours or until we couldn't go on." (31)

"I could not do these exercises because one of the guards—who was 63, my own age!—kept beating me." (31)

"The next day I had to perform frog jumps for half an hour. After that, the SS guard forced me to jump on the bed and then crawl underneath it, jump up on the table and then crawl underneath it, and crawl under the chairs and then climb on top of the wardrobe. He acted like he was going to shoot me, forced me to pretend I was preaching, then had me climb down, then back up again, and finally made me sing hymns for two hours.

"Whenever I was unable to complete my gymnastics, I was kicked and beaten." (90)

"One morning two soldiers forced two French prisoners who had gotten sick from daily beatings to eat the excrement encrusted in their clothing. They made these two prisoners walk up and down the mess hall telling their fellow prisoners how good it tasted." (11)

"One SS guard ordered his dog to bite a deportee and when it didn't obey, the guard hit the dog so hard it vomited; whereupon an Israeli was ordered to eat the dog's vomit." (39)

"Once in Mauthausen a 16-year-old Spanish boy came to me full of fear and I told him to stay. A guard came into the room, approached me, and ordered me to do something which I refused to do. He made as if to hit me. The Spanish boy, who was hiding under the bed, thought that the guard was going to ask me where the boy was, so he ran out of the barracks and straight into the electrified barbed-wire fence. The guard gave an order, and right before my very eyes the boy was torn apart by eight vicious dogs." (89)

"One of the SS guards, a 19-year-old boy, acted as overseer of the prisoners who were working on the construction of an improved crematory. He approached one of the strongest and best-looking workers, ordered him to bow his head, and struck him full force on the back of the neck with his cudgel. As the worker collapsed, the SS guard ordered two prisoners to take him by the legs and, with his face to the ground, swing him around in an effort to revive him. After they had lugged him across 100 yards of frozen earth, he had still not regained consciousness and remained motionless. So the SS guard grabbed a cement sewer pipe, lifted it up, and brought it down on the back of the victim who was already lying unconscious on the ground. This he did five times. At the first blow, the body of the victim twitched in death throes; at the second blow it grew stiff. At the fifth blow the guard ordered the victim to be turned faced up, and then he pried his eyelids open with a stick. When he had made sure that the man was dead, the guard spat on him, lit a cigarette, and then walked away as if nothing

had happened." (110)

"Frequently the SS guards would storm into our barracks in the middle of the night, drive us naked outside no matter how bad the weather, and make us crawl, run, whatever. Those who did not perform fast enough or showed signs of weakening were thrashed to death." (22)

"We were scarcely across the threshold before they began hitting on the head all those who tried to slip by them. To speed up the process, they turned the dogs loose and let them attack us and bite us. One after the other, they made us go in and out repeatedly just to train the dogs." (17)

"They would drag an internee up before a gleaming white mangle and force him to stick his finger between the two large rubber cylinders. Then an SS guard or, at his command, a prisoner would turn the crank of the mangle. The arm of the victim would then be squeezed up to the elbow or the shoulder. The screams of the victim were the chief amusement of the SS guards. Meanwhile, the man whose arm had been crushed was relegated to the category of the disabled and summarily condemned to death.

"One of their 'ingenious amusements' was the following: An SS guard would collar a few prisoners and tell them that they had broken some camp rule or other and that they were to be shot. One of the prisoners would then be stood against the wall, and the guard would press his revolver against the prisoner's temple. Expecting to be shot, 99 times out of 100 the victim would close his eyes. Then the guard would shoot into the air while another guard would stealthily sneak up on the victim and give him a severe blow on the head with a huge board. The prisoner would then collapse unconscious. When, after a few minutes, he would come to and open his eyes, the guard who was standing beside him would say, laughing wildly: 'You see, you're in the hereafter. You see also that in the hereafter there are Germans. It's impossible to escape us.' Since the prisoner would be bleeding profusely and not have the power to stand up, he was considered as good as dead, and after the guards had had their fun with him, they would shoot him.

"Another 'amusement': A prisoner would be stripped and thrown into the swimming pool. He would try to stay afloat and somehow get out of the water. Meanwhile, the SS guards would be scrambling around the pool, doing their best to push or kick him away from the edge. If he did manage to avoid their kicks, he had the right to climb out of the water, but only on condition that he get completely dressed again in three seconds. The guards stood there timing this with their watches in their hands. Naturally, no one could possibly get dressed in three seconds, so the victim would be thrown back into the water where he would eventually drown.

"At nine o'clock in the morning on December 2, 1941, the prisoners

were assembled and told that a packet of tobacco had been stolen from a supervisor and that the offender should return it at once. All the prisoners insisted that they did not have the tobacco, and then the Nazi brutes began their little game. Everybody was ordered to undress. The temperature was about 15 degrees above zero. Nobody resisted because everyone knew that to do so would be suicide, so all they could do was wait and see what would happen to 500 naked people.

"At midday the first ones collapsed, some beaten to death, others unconscious. They tried to arouse the unconscious by whipping them, but none of them could stand up again and they all died, their backs broken. A lot of the other prisoners got pneumonia and high fevers. When the brutes noticed this, they said: 'Oh, are you overheated? Good. We'll cool you off.' The sick were then thrown into bathtubs filled with icy water, and when they lost consciousness, they either drowned or were taken straight from the bathtub and thrown into a cement cell where these poor wretches would crawl around on the floor seeking the warm body of a comrade who himself would perish the next minute. One of these wretches tried warming his fingers in the nostrils of a comrade. The jailers would measure those who were still alive for their coffins, then remind them of their impending death and stamp a number on their thighs. In this one night 32 died." (96)

"When they felt the urge, the Nazis would fire from the shooting range, mowing down everything that appeared in the main street of the camp, or they would fire into the barracks without warning when they heard too much noise, or maybe 30 brutes with clubs or revolvers in their fists would strike out right and left. The inmates would jump out the windows and, pressed by those behind them, get entangled in the electric fence six feet away." (50)

"Some of us were driven crazy." (98)

"Without any reason whatsoever, the Kapos would call us out, one after the other, just to beat us. Those of us who didn't succumb to the beatings were kicked." (33)

"In Block 21 we took care of a great many prisoners suffering from fractured jaws they got from being beaten by the Kapos." (86)

"Somewhere around 80 percent of those who were admitted to the hospital died a few days later." (87)

"Some of my fellow prisoners died because a Kapo wanted to show someone how you could kill a person with just one blow." (43)

"The internees who had been common criminals were the worst (Polish or German). They would kill a Jew just for his bread or his soup. One 18 year-old Kapo killed more than 400 Jews for their food rations." (100)

"We were herded into the latrine single file. A Kapo stood at the door. No sooner were we inside the lavatory than the Kapo would

begin to count in a loud voice. He would count to 10, and by then you had to be out again. If you couldn't make it in that time, you risked being hit on the head with a blow intended to be fatal. Every day many of my friends died as a result of a visit to the latrine." (101)

"The head Kapo at the train station at Auschwitz had killed 30,000 prisoners in order to attain his freedom and be accepted into Hitler's Life Guards." (90)

"Women suffered the same fate. They were beaten and abused. The mortality rate was higher for them than it was for men." (104)

"M. planned to carry out the sentence of 25 blows with a rubber truncheon on three Jewish women who had been caught eating raw turnips while unloading a freight car. The carrying out of this punishment was horrible: the women cried out, it was unbearable. M. ordered his soldiers to pick up the ones who had fallen to the ground and hit them again.

"Another time the women had been laughing and singing on their way back from the factory. M. ordered them to stand for an hour and a half in snow up to their knees and with an icy wind blowing.

"And yet another time, when the women had laughed, he put them in two rows, grabbed a whip made of five or six knotted ropes, and hit them across the face with it. For the slightest infraction we were deprived of food for two whole days." (55)

"B. came to the camp on a bicycle. Along the way he knocked the prisoners about, went out of his way to pick on the the elderly, and boxed ears on the slightest provocation." (53)

"I saw SS matrons beat a friend of mine senseless with a leather belt." (61)

"There was one SS matron, a common criminal (she had murdered her husband), who was especially brutal. She kicked and beat many of the female prisoners mercilessly, and once, when I turned around to look at a friend of mine, she gave me a vicious blow to the head and kicked me in the stomach." (97)

"We called her the 'green mare' because of her protruding teeth. She knew only too well how to belt you in the mouth hard enough to knock your teeth out or break your jaw. One day the 'green mare' struck me with her fist because my shoelaces were untied.

"There was another SS matron who was constantly threatening us with her revolver; we called her the 'animal trainer.' Another we called the 'boar.' All these women were products of the Hitler Youth and had been thoroughly indoctrinated. They themselves had been woefully abused." (28)

"Often the SS matrons would amuse themselves by displays of appalling brutality in their dealings with the female internees. One evening they summoned an internee to their quarters and..."

knocked her down the minute she got there. Then another, who was short, climbed up on a table so that she could reach the internee's breast with her feet and gave them a powerful kick." (72)

"The one we called 'Lageracerca' was a scrawny, repulsive old battle-ax. She stood out because of her sadism and her sexual perversity; she was half crazy. At either the morning or the evening roll call she would search among the exhausted and emaciated women for the prettiest, those who more or less still looked human, and would whack them on the hands for no reason whatsoever. If the victims collapsed, the 'Lageracerca' would go for their legs, first with her whip, then with her spiked boots. Usually her victims left a bloody trail behind them, and after one or two such mistreatments would soon turn sick and die." (110)

"One woman was sentenced to death after she was denounced by a German internee for giving water to a Jewish woman." (77)

"When we first got to the camp, there were 120 of us women. A month later 30 were dead." (61)

"Many times the Block leader was ordered to kill a certain number of women. These women were beaten until they passed out. I myself saw the camp strewn with bodies; they looked like white seagulls lying prostrate in the snow." (103)

ROLL CALL

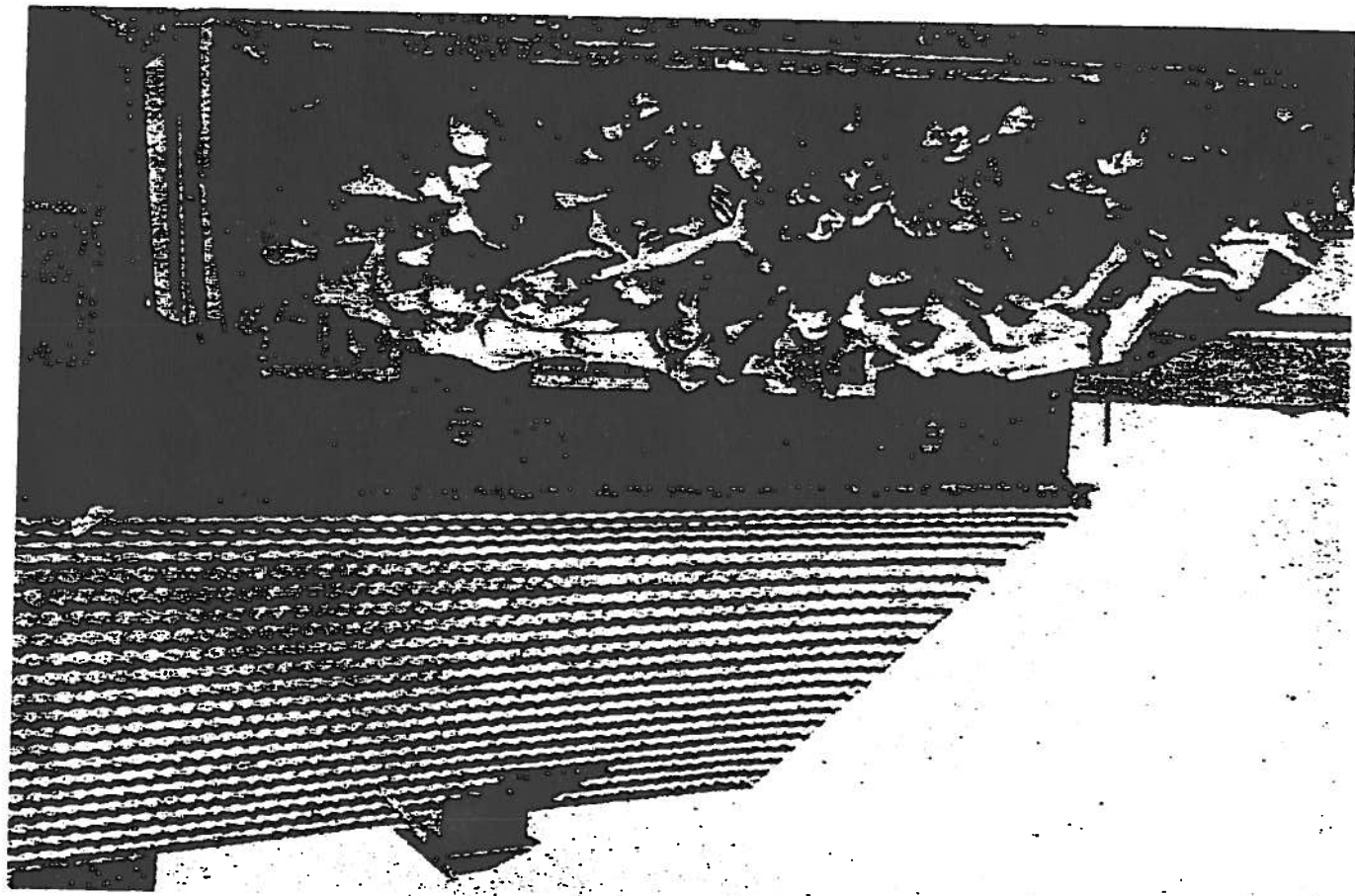
"Whether it rained, or snowed, or stormed—in fog or in sunshine—all prisoners had to fall out for roll call every morning." (74)

"They woke us up at 3:30 in the morning." (116)

"If you happened to stretch out in bed for even another minute, you'd be rousted out with a billy club and doused with cold water." (120)

"Sick women were not excused from this 'martyrdom' called roll call; I say 'martyrdom,' because I saw many women pass out from the cold, from standing in the snow with an icy wind blowing. Since you had to have a temperature of over 100 degrees to be admitted to the hospital, you can well imagine what an unbearable wait that meant for a prisoner who had only a 99-degree temperature and who had been brutally torn from, if not a warm bed, then at least a lukewarm one. The female guards, 'lady soldiers,' who were inhumane to us, admitted without shame that the purpose of such treatment was to hasten our extermination. Once I fainted from weakness and by sheer accident came to again without any help." (42)

"Often I even had to assist comrades to roll call who had passed out or were suffering an epileptic fit. We had to lay them next to us on the ground and were not allowed to take care of them. I got a lot of blows



from fists and clubs from the German or Polish policewomen or female guards because I tried to help women who were writhing in the dirt in an epileptic fit." (67)

"At the first roll call a friend of mine was sick. Naively, I went up to our 'Blockova' and said: 'Excuse me for bothering you, but a friend of mine is very sick, can she be excused from roll call?' She answered: 'Here even the dying come to roll call.'" (28)

"As a matter of fact, not only the dying but those who had died that day had to attend roll call so that the figures jibed. They were laid out on a bench that was carried by two prisoners." (64)

"Three times I had to prop up dead bodies at roll call. Finally, I told an SS guard that this didn't make any sense. His answer was: 'Dead or alive, everybody has to be there.' Then he added: 'Roll call is roll call.'" (54)

"Every morning the dead and the dying were dragged to roll call." (60)

"There was a child with us about six months old. This child had to come with us to roll call, but of course it had to be carried in someone's arms, and that ruined the symmetry of the lineup. An SS guard decided, therefore, that the child should be 'posted' to a brothel. 'Posted' ordinarily referred to those deportees who were distributed among the various inner circles of the camp. They enjoyed preferential treatment that excused them from roll call on account of their work. The SS guard added that the child would be taken care of in a more motherly fashion. I asked why the child was being taken into custody and was told: 'For the good of the Greater Reich.'

"If a comrade did not show up for roll call, we had to stay there as long as the search for him lasted." (54)

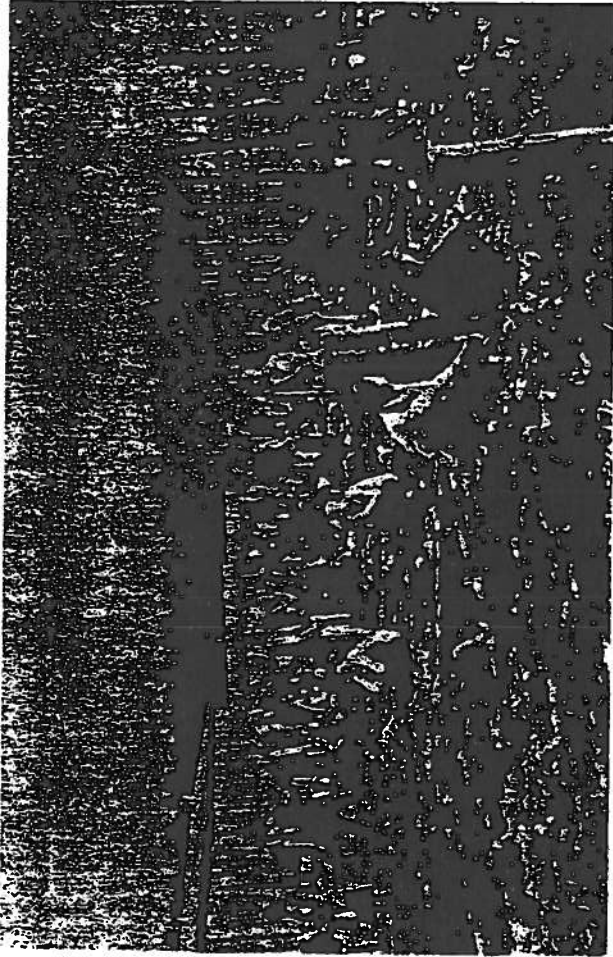
"In Mauthausen I saw the way one Russian comrade, who was five minutes late for roll call, was kicked in the head by twelve SS guards." (39)

"Rabbi E., who suffered from dysentery, met a tragic end one day when he was a few minutes late for roll call. The squad leader grabbed hold of him and plunged his head into the toilet and poured cold water on him; then he took out a revolver and shot him." (104)

"We stood roll call for up to five and a half hours, while the weak were stretched out on the ground in front of the 'lady officers.' Speaking was forbidden unless you wanted a bucket of water over your head, and the mornings were cold." (116)

"The Kapo of our unit killed a friend of mine because he was not standing up straight. He hit him on the jaw with his fist, and when my friend had fallen to the ground, he choked him by pressing his foot down on his throat." (33)

"Evening roll call often lasted so long that the..."



'rare, sunny day mocks the mire and filth, not to mention the monotony and menace of daily life in the camps



the spigot often had to serve thousands of prisoners

endure the harsh Polish climate for hours on end." (60)

"Ravensbrück concentration camp was built on a drained swamp. The earth there was so acidic that it caused bad burns. Many had their legs half eaten away. Out in the open country, the acid in the air clawed at your face and caused the skin to fester. Women who had been there for a long time had horrible sores. I couldn't bear to look at them." (76)

"After 12 hours' work and a roll call at 6 p.m., the whole camp would sometimes be called out to the parade ground for another roll call at midnight, a particularly unpleasant experience on bitterly cold winter nights.

"During snowstorms there were seemingly endless roll calls day and night. We had to stand there for three, sometimes four, even six hours." (63)

"At the time of the German defeat at Stalingrad, we had an especially long roll call. It took place during a snowstorm and lasted all day long. The next day the roll call continued." (14)

"1,200 standing in formation, motionless and numb with cold." (63)

"The first shock I received at a night roll call was hearing a passing SS guard ask the squad leader: 'How many dead?' 'Ten,' answered the squad leader. To which the guard responded: 'What, so few?'" (35)

"As a matter of fact, most of the prisoners died at roll call." (103)

"Many of my comrades perished at the morning roll call. I saw at least one die each day, and frequently as many as three." (74)

"If you were unconscious and could not respond at roll call, your name was put on a list of the dead and you would be clubbed to death." (111)

"Sometimes six or seven people would drop dead at roll call, in addition to countless other prisoners who had to be taken to the infirmary, which was filled with the dying. Often ten would fall dead, but you didn't dare move them. That was forbidden." (63)

"People collapsed. Sometimes the dogs were turned loose on them to make sure they were dead." (14)

"The SS guards, armed with rubber truncheons, overwhelmed them with blows and kicks to make them stand up, which was impossible, since they were already dead." (74)

"A Belgian minister died during a roll call that took place in extraordinarily cold weather." (62)

PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE

"Routine punishments were: 25 lashes on the buttocks with a cane or a whip; several hours standing motionless in the summer sun or half naked in freezing temperatures; 2 or 3 days of starvation; running for half an hour carrying a 40 pound stone past a line of guards who took

turns whipping the prisoners as they passed by." (92)

"The most frequent punishment was caning." (10)

"For the slightest infraction, prisoners would be caned or beaten with a whip." (96)

"The SS guards ordered us to bend over and stick our heads and shoulders between two posts which they immediately clamped tightly together. When you are held fast like that, you are no longer in control of your movements. And while you are struggling in vain to get free, somebody is giving you 25 lashes from behind." (101)

"For the slightest disobedience, you'd get a minimum of 25 lashes from the SS." (21)

"The number of lashes varied according to the gravity of the transgression (25, 50, 100)." (96)

"Collective punishment usually took the form of starving the whole camp for anywhere from three to, as was often the case, eight days. (In November 1939 this punishment was made worse for the Jews by locking them up in blacked-out barracks.) During this time the prisoners were forced to stand at attention in freezing temperatures. One time this punishment lasted six days, by the end of which 180 prisoners had died. Of 12,000 camp inmates, at least ten percent died as a result of these measures. It was the worst torture in the camp. Other punishments included disciplinary drills after working hours. Prisoners disciplined in this way usually died." (105)

"Of all the cellblocks, one block was much worse than the others: the 'punishment block.'" (46)

"This dungeon was in total darkness and built so that the prisoners in it could neither lie down nor stand up straight." (107)

"Whether alone or in groups, the women prisoners had to stand ankle deep in water." (53)

"The occupants of the dungeon didn't get any food." (107)

"During your stay in the dungeon you would be sentenced to receive a minimum of 25 lashes per day. An SS guard would beat you with a bullwhip; the pain was unbearable." (120)

"For the most part the beatings were applied to the small of the back, which would lacerate your flesh." (21)

"A wound might measure six inches in diameter on either half of the buttocks, which meant that the two halves were nothing but one big wound." (80)

"Beatings were usually accompanied by other measures. One internee was led into the shower stall and left to hang for a couple of hours with his hands tied behind his back. During this time he was severely beaten in the face and all over his body with a bullwhip. When he was brought back to the office of the liaison officer, he had to sign a statement. Then he was forced to stand at attention for several hours."

morning until 7 the next. Another internee, along with two of his friends, was taken to the shower stalls. There he was given 25 lashes on the buttocks and lower back with a wet bullwhip. As with the others who were punished, he was forced to count the number of lashes. If one of those being beaten made a mistake in counting, the two SS guards would begin the punishment all over from the beginning. After receiving the 25 lashes, the internee was forced to perform strenuous calisthenics until the other two had received their punishment.

"If one of the victims didn't do the exercises properly or happened to stumble, he would be beaten severely with the bullwhip on every imaginable part of his body. One of the two prisoners being punished with H. was a Jew who was beaten to death by the SS guards; the other prisoners were forced to carry the corpse to the dungeon. H., along with the two other prisoners (one of whom was dead), was locked up for three days and nights in the dungeon. He was obliged to remain standing because his wounds made it impossible for him to sit or lie down." (107)

"I myself was horribly mistreated. My head was so swollen from frequent beatings that nobody recognized me any more. R. M., director of the outpatient clinic of the camp hospital and the one who bandaged me, can attest to the condition I was in when I appeared before him after that kind of treatment. In this condition I had to take off my stockings, arrange my clothes in perfect order, and quickly unbutton my jacket, all of which caused me such excruciating pain that my limbs refused to function." (38)

"If a prisoner, from total exhaustion, could no longer do what was demanded of her, she was considered a 'backslider' and locked in a cell without food until she died." (113)

"The prisoners were constantly tortured." (112)

"I saw one woman whose head one torturer immersed in a tub of water until she lost consciousness; then this fiend brought her to by hitting her on the head with his fists." (42)

"I suffered the following torture: stuck with red-hot pins all over my body, total dislocation of both legs which resulted in torn ligaments. Scars from these various tortures were still quite visible nine months later, particularly one ugly scar on my thigh which was the result of a stab wound. At the time I was tortured, I was forced to undress; then two women were called over to take a look at me, for it had been maintained that all priests had syphilis and they wanted to prove it. It was up to us to prove that it was not true. One of the most painful ordeals I ever had to endure was having tufts of facial hair pulled out by the roots." (54)

"My fingers were crushed in a device especially designed for that purpose; then I was stuck into a barrel-shaped wooden contraption in

which my body was crushed by a steel disk. I was not released until I began to spit gall and blood." (72)

"I was hung by the thumbs and beaten on the feet; my head was immersed in water and my private parts stuck with needles. My back was tied to a barrel while someone pulled at my limbs and tried to tear them apart." (20)

"T. had one eye gouged out and his fingernails and toenails torn off. The brothers F. were grotesquely kicked and beaten until they passed out from dislocated limbs and were thrown in the cellar. For two days they remained unconscious. They were in such a delirium that one of them invited me to accompany him to a café and a ball. They had gone mad. They vomited and urinated blood." (119)

"On March 21, I saw five Alsations, one hand chained to the wall, the other behind their back; they remained like that for four or five days because they didn't want to fight for Germany." (85)

"Often they fastened the hands of the accused behind their backs with handcuffs and let them hang by their wrists from the ceiling, all the while beating them with a whip. Some passed out, others went crazy and began to sing." (25)

"They committed the following atrocities: They would fasten your wrists with loose handcuffs, stick your knees in the oval that was formed, and then push a stick between the back of your knees and the inside of your elbows, forming a ball. You would then be stood on your head with your knees and one of your shoulders serving as a base. This position was eventually attained with the help of kicks and blows. Two men would then take sticks and beat you with all their might on the back, the buttocks, and the ankles. I myself once counted 187 blows. When the pain got so bad that the victims could no longer keep from screaming, the torturers would take the victims aside and stamp on their faces with their hobnailed boots while an 'assistant' would stuff their mouths with rags." (119)

"My hands became paralyzed after I had been hanging for hours by my handcuffs." (80)

"The torture was so bad that Colonel B. went on a hunger strike. He died about one month after our arrival." (8)

"The instruments of torture included handcuffs with serrated pincers, apparatuses for crushing the genitals, and bullwhips with lead studs at the tips. They knew just how far they could go and still leave their victims alive, which is why their victims often preferred death. When the parts of the body that were normally abused became immune to pain, they would go for the more sensitive parts, like the genitals.

"S., a 35-year-old father, was abused in a way that comes close to being the ultimate refinement in gruesomeness. When he got back from the first treatment he was so exhausted that he could not walk.

gaping wounds on his body did not permit him to lie down. These brutes had crushed his penis and his testicles." (119)

"My penis was subjected to electric shock by means of a device that had the precision of a fine, surgical instrument. It consisted of a tube made out of two flexible steel bands connected at the end and fitted with a ring and a screw. They stuck your penis in and tightened the screw. At the end of the tube was a wire that led to a rheostat. When the current was turned on, you felt absolutely nothing. The pain was triggered when the current was interrupted, causing sharp jolts to be sent to the nerves." (88)

"The wife of the Kommandant used to go riding every day. If she caught an internee looking at her, she would make a note of his number. The internee would immediately be thrown into prison, given 25 blows with a club, and sometimes killed." (38)

"When the jailer conducted an interrogation, he would carry his revolver and threaten to shoot any prisoner who did not confess. Not surprisingly, he sometimes shot a prisoner." (65)

"One prisoner was kept in a cellar, blindfolded and chained, for six months." (117)

"Once the number of those being tortured reached about 30 people. The more wine and schnapps they got for their effort, the more wanton the SS guards became. In the adjacent dormitory the internees could not close their eyes the whole night because of the anguished cries of the tortured. The ordeal lasted until morning roll call and was such that most of the victims could no longer stand up. They were badly cut up. Many of them were unrecognizable from having been beaten in the face.

"For four weeks the tortured were exposed to the rigors of the weather, their hands always tied behind their backs, except when they had to use the bathroom or eat or drink. The chains were so heavy that the sufferers began to complain. Finally they were hanged." (25)

"Many internees died in the camp as a result of relentless torture." (107)

"Many were whipped until they died. Many were strangled. Many were drained completely of their blood." (56)

"During the 13 months I was in jail, 300 to 400 deportees were murdered. I can give you a fairly exact number because those who carried the bodies would call out at the entrance whenever an internee had been murdered." (38)

"Almost no one got out of the camp prisons alive." (105)

"To look out the cell windows meant certain death. Internees who happened to get caught were beaten, stabbed, or murdered. The same punishment awaited those who even glanced at a piece of newspaper (especially when it was intended to be used as toilet paper)." (38)

"Instances of hangings for trivial things (stealing bread or stealing

wire for shoelaces) were frequent. Such was the fate of two French prisoners." (22)

"The camp was fenced in by two narrowly separated rows of electrified barbed wire which also provided an opportunity for punishment. Those being punished had to spend the night between the two rows of wire, close to a watchtower, where they could neither lie down nor sit; they had to remain standing and, of course, got nothing to eat. When their exhaustion brought them to the point where they could no longer hold out, they would stumble against one or the other of the electrified fences and be found dead." (90)

"Another favorite method the Nazis had for torturing prisoners was stringing them up from trees. During 1938/39 this form of torture was common in the forests surrounding the camp. 20 to 25 trees were selected for this purpose and were equipped with hooks six feet up the trunk. The hands of the prisoners would be tied behind their backs and they would be hoisted up until their feet no longer touched the ground. The camp leader and an SS guard would go from tree to tree and beat the prisoners with a whip. The shortest hanging time was half an hour. To be left hanging there for three hours was not uncommon. This torture was performed at least twice a week.

"20 prisoners were chained together and forced to form a circle around a tree in the camp courtyard. All night long the SS sicced their dogs on them. By morning only three prisoners were still alive." (105)

"One SS guard hanged a prisoner from a branch and then forced the prisoner's comrades to use the branch to catapult the body into midair so that he could take potshots at it." (70)

"The specialty of another one of the 'torturer's apprentices' was to drown prisoners in a barrel. The SS guards would grab hold of a man by the legs, plunge him into a barrel of icy water, pull him out, then repeat this procedure over and over again until the man drowned." (95)

"A Polish priest was publicly castrated. After this operation, the priest was bandaged with a towel and returned, with the help of his comrades, to his quarters where he was drowned." (90)

"I was witness to the following scene: One poor prisoner, after he had been viciously beaten, was dragged into a washroom (March 1944, washroom of Block 48), laid on the ground, and doused with buckets of cold water until he died." (3)

"A few days after our arrival, the Block leader killed one of our comrades from Bordeaux in a horrible way. He first made him strip naked, then drenched him in cold water and left him outside for several hours (it was the first of February), then he was brought back inside the Block and tied to a post. The next morning, about 5 o'clock, he received a beating that broke his neck, and when he didn't die

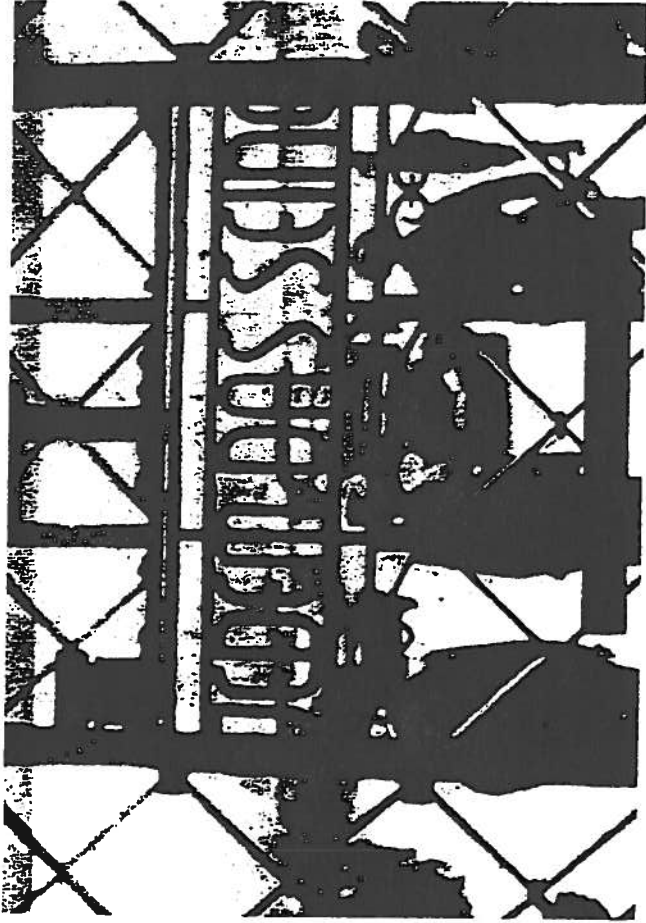
dishwater." (8)

"An SS woman killed a little French girl by forcing her to drink water until she couldn't swallow any more. Then she knocked her down and tried using the heel of her boots to force the girl to vomit up the water. She hit her so hard that the girl vomited blood." (48)

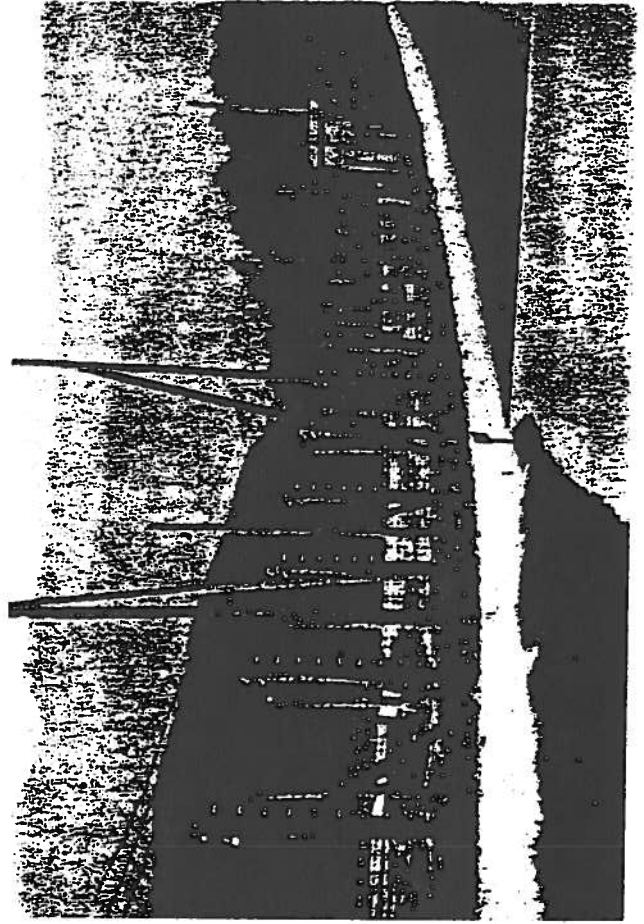
"After endless torment the prisoners no longer had the strength to cover the 30 feet required to get back in line. Those who remained lying on the floor were taken to the camp kennels where they became the main course for the ravenous German shepherds. With their sharp teeth these vicious dogs tore apart the bodies of people who had been thrown into the cages still half alive. We found out later that whatever scraps of human flesh were left over from this feeding frenzy were taken daily to the crematory. No trace was left. Everything was spotless, even pleasant." (110)

"To every act of horror a certain number of prisoners were required to be present as observers. In this death camp the cries of pain were sometimes so excruciating that the Kommandant, thinking he was doing something to alleviate the suffering, had the prisoners who were not serving as observers gather together on a hill not far from the place of torture and sing uplifting songs." (96)

"On the iron gate itself you could read the motto of the camp: 'JEDEM DAS SEINE' ('To Each His Own')." (69)



"Jedem Das Seine" ("To Each His Own")—the cruelly ironic welcome to one of the camps



Electrified barbed wire stretches along a restraining canal at this camp hidden in the foothill



Chapter 6

Labor

MEN AT WORK

"The central administration of the camp had contractual obligations with German firms such as Krupp, Kohlen-Syndikat, etc., which a certain number of worker-prisoners had to fulfill." (86)

"All prisoners were obliged to work." (60)

"Without exception: men, women, old people, young people, pregnant women, the sick." (125)

"The fact that I was a medical student did not stop them from putting me to work as a bricklayer, farm worker, miner, or electrician." (81)

"The deportees were made available for work at the Gustloff factory, which belonged to finance minister Sauckel, the Mibau factory (radio-electronic war supplies), the D.A.W., etc.

"The following departments were established in the Gustloff factory:

Finishing and assembling weapons, with 280 prisoners, on February 23, 1944. Factory 11 on April 1, 1943, with 51 prisoners, a number which grew to 300. Following its destruction in an air raid, 1,500 prisoners were transferred to the cleaning up of four warehouses. The von Mibau factory began cleaning up operations in November 1943 with 30 prisoners; by November 1944 there were 1,500. After the raid, only 30 prisoners were assigned to cleaning up.

"The list of the war supply facilities that continued to use prison labor is as follows:

Munitions factory: Oberndorf
Gustloff: Weimar

200 prisoners
2,252 prisoners

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Artillery factories: Hasag, Leipzig, and Taucha | 825 prisoners |
| Junker factories: various cities | 5,875 prisoners |
| BMW factories: Eisenach and Abderoda | 619 prisoners |
| Aircraft factory Siebel: Halle | 633 prisoners |
| Bochum Syndicate | 1,167 prisoners |
| Hasag: various cities | 3,609 prisoners |
| Rhine Metal Borsig: Düsseldorf | 260 prisoners |
| Brown Coal Gasoline, A.G.: Magdeburg-Troglitz | 3,828 prisoners |
| Military garages | Construction squads |
| SS-Home | Farm squads |
| Quarries | Plumbing squads |
| Masonry | SS city squads |

"All of these squads had been in operation since the camp opened. Their continuation depended on that of the camp. In October 1942, Squad X supplied farm workers for the Gusloff factory. In 1943, the railroad between Weimar and Buchenwald was built by about 1,000 prisoners." (71)

"Other workers were put to work building underground factories for the construction of the V 1 rocket, building new facilities in the camp, unloading airplane motors in the middle of the forest, and laying water pipes. They also built streets that led to the forest. All work of this kind was done far from civilian population centers.

"We also worked for the I. G. Farben Industry, which employed approximately 40,000 civilians: Poles, Ukrainians, French, etc., plus 10,000 camp inmates and 400 to 500 English prisoners-of-war." (125)

"There was in addition a so-called 'cable wire' department that made steel nets for snaring submarines. The work consisted of rolling out very stiff, unextruded steel wire, which was very rough and tore the hands of the workers. In this department there was tremendous pressure for increased output. I also had to work in the optical department where prisoners polished lenses for a German war goods factory. This work was done in air thick with a gas—I think it was tetrachloride—which induced a kind of asthma that afflicted many of my comrades. Mostly Belgians were used in this department, but there were also a few French workers." (52)

"On the afternoon of July 22, 1944, 1,400 French workers were sent to join the work crews in Neckarelz and Neckargerach. Both these crews were stationed in Neckartal, 12 miles southeast of Heidelberg. They supplied manpower for various undertakings, in particular: outfitting an underground aircraft factory in Obrigheim, outfitting a similar factory in Hochhausen, building barracks for the disciplining of SS personnel, building barracks for the homeless, and performing certain farming tasks in the area." (92)

"For example the airstrip at Klein Königsherg was built by 300

deportees who leveled the ground by tamping it down with their feet for days on end. By the time this job was done, only 10 of them were left." (114)

"During the first few months several squads were sent out to dig ditches along the Dutch and Danish borders. Many prisoners worked at unloading cargo boats." (63)

"In the fields we worked like horses pulling heavy wagons full of potatoes. We loaded them up and brought them in." (21)

"Finally there were the so-called 'heavy stone carriers.' They had to lift heavy stones up to their shoulders and then heave them onto a wagon. The foremen would not allow two men to help each other with a stone." (64)

"Awakened at 3:30 in the morning! A few minutes later roll call would begin, which meant standing at attention until 6. Work began at 6:30. Before they were marched out to work, everyone was carefully searched. Those internees in prison clothes were lined up in columns of three and surrounded by guards with rifles and machine guns." (121)

"The march to work was accompanied by the sound of cheerful music. The orchestra was made up of musicians who were true artists." (103)

"So, forward in military step and start out on the left foot!" (18)

"We had to run the whole way." (121)

"A lot of the prisoners had to cover a good five miles to the work zone." (78)

"We were forced to sing along the way. Whoever did not sing would be severely beaten. We also had to march with our shoes on our shoulders so as not to wear them out." (33)

"A big, empty truck and a few stretcher bearers followed. Anybody who got out of line or collapsed from exhaustion was shot on the spot and loaded onto the truck by the bearers. In the evening, the truck never came back empty." (121)

"In winter we worked 11 hours straight in snow up to our knees." (59)

"Fires were lit at which the Kapos warmed themselves, but the workers, of course, had no access to them. In temperatures of 10 to 20 below zero they had to handle iron products; naturally most of them suffered frostbitten hands." (87)

"I remember particularly the case of an American named R. who worked with us for just a week before he died of exposure." (79)

"After a few weeks of this sort of work, a terrible epidemic of typhus broke out. The weakest prisoners died by the hundreds." (104)

"In the railroad tunnel we worked in intolerable dust. There was no real ventilation. Whatever air there was came from two openings in the tunnel three kilometers apart, and it was contaminated by the soot from the trains, the machinery in the tunnel and above all the

blasting.

"The work consisted of unloading rails and machinery brought into the tunnel by train on a track that ran the entire length of the tunnel. The material was unloaded at alcoves dug into the sides of the tunnel. Other prisoners were assigned to work in the shafts." (7)

"The prisoners lived in the mine, in alcoves dug into the tunnel walls in which wooden frames with four floors had been installed. It was almost impossible to sleep." (108)

"The farm work was difficult and dangerous. In the first few months workers lost more than 50 pounds, which, of course, they could never gain back." (43)

"Elsewhere, the work consisted of carrying stones and loading them onto a small railroad car, all done under the following conditions: Two prisoners had to load a car in ten minutes. Then they had to push the car 100 yards ahead so it could be hooked onto a locomotive. It has been estimated that at least 50,000 prisoners lost their lives at this job." (75)

"Deportees who worked in an underground stone quarry in Linz went one whole year without seeing the light of day." (117)

"The work was often senseless. It consisted of lugging heavy stones from one end of the quarry to the other and from the bottom to the top and then back again—always in double time." (75)

"The Germans had countless groups of professors, doctors, engineers, and other professionals from Greece doing common labor, like hauling heavy stones, that far exceeded their strength. The SS beat to death those scholars who collapsed in exhaustion from the hard work. The whole group of Greek scholars was eliminated inside of five weeks by a system of starvation, debilitating work, beatings, and murder." (111)

"Nobody could withstand that sort of punishment." (104)

"A Parisian lawyer named B. was killed in the following way: He was forced to run while carrying a 100-pound sack of cement, to return to get another sack, and then to make his way back again. He could not hold out for more than an hour, so he was left in peace for the rest of the day. On the following day, however, the SS officer who guarded the squad in the morning tore the lawyer's glasses off and ordered him to run with a cement sack on his back. Exhausted and confused, the lawyer threw the sack down and said to his comrades: 'I am going, goodbye.' He walked away, stepped over the boundary line, and was shot down on the spot." (50)

"There were people who chose to hurl themselves against an electrified barbed-wire fence and thereby commit suicide." (43)

"In certain squads, the work day lasted 12 hours, from noon until midnight or from midnight until noon. There was never a moment, for any reason whatsoever, that was not committed to work. All the routine of daily life—sleeping, eating, personal hygiene, medical

examinations—had to be taken care of in the 9 or 10 hours not claimed by the work details." (108)

"In addition, they used us for all sorts of camp duties: taking food to the SS guards, unloading incoming food deliveries, cleaning and sweeping various parts of the camp. For these jobs they always preferred French workers." (87)

"They were completely worn out by the miserable workday and all the grueling labor. They were all dirty and in a state of appalling despondency." (125)

"After a debilitating day in the quarries, all the internees still had to stand at attention for a two-hour roll call." (113)

"Which could sometimes last from midnight until 7 a.m." (117)

"No relaxation was ever scheduled for the prisoners. It was expressly forbidden for them either to stand or sit in the courtyard between working hours." (113)

"Sometimes, to amuse themselves, the SS guards would have us play a sport that would tire us out more in half an hour than a whole week of work." (23)

"In the barracks there were two reasons why it was impossible to get any rest: the lights that burned continuously, and the commotion of people constantly coming and going." (7)

"17 hours work, 2 hours sleep." (117)

"One of the main reasons for exhaustion was the change of shifts. When we changed, we had to work 24 hours without a break. The supervision by the SS guards was terrible then, for the prisoners fell asleep everywhere and that provided an opportunity to mete out new punishments. This change of shifts took place either every week or every other week." (7)

"One time we were made to wait around from 4 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock that evening on the pretext of having our pictures taken, and then we were to be sent to the factory until 6 the next morning. Because we did not get photographed that day, we were assembled again at 6 a.m. and made to wait until 1 o'clock in the afternoon, supposedly to be photographed. Altogether we stood for 33 hours straight." (79)

"No rest on Sunday." (66)

"We had one Sunday a month free when we didn't have to go to work in squads, and this Sunday was ruined because we had to work in the camp where we were beaten." (100)

"Sometimes we spent the whole day at roll call." (33)

"The food was just sufficient to keep you from starving to death but not at all enough to enable you to accomplish any meaningful work." (83)

"We had only half an hour to eat. The soup was served in a bare-bone

with room for 150 people. There were 1,500 of us. We were so packed in that the newcomers failed to eat because they could not grasp what sort of gymnastics were required to obtain the soup and to eat it in such cramped quarters. Since so many people had to enter, eat, and leave in that scant half hour, they had to be processed rapidly, and this processing was accelerated by a 'green' (a common German criminal who wore a green insignia and had complete say over the life and death of the prisoners), who would stand on a barrel, wielding a huge club which he used on those who passed beneath him. He usually managed to get 10 to 15 victims." (207)

"Sometimes we had only 15 minutes for the soup, and usually we had to bow down to get it." (103)

"There were days when people would work all day long without rest or food. They would then return at four in the afternoon to the camp they had left that morning at three." (125)

"With such rations, the ability of a normal person to work lasted an average of six months. People who were not strong might last no more than two months. First, they used up their fat, then their muscles, and they would lose 30 to 35 percent of their weight." (93)

"It is only natural that many of them collapsed from total exhaustion. For these unfortunate ones it meant the end was near." (96)

"As many as 50 deportees might go to work in the morning under the supervision of a Kapo. There would also be 50 rations allotted. If the Kapo brought back only 40 or 45 deportees in the evening, the leftover rations belonged to him." (89)

"By the same token, if a guard brought back 15 dead, he got 15 days of vacation." (103)

"One day I heard the following conversation between two Germans, a Kapo and an SS guard:

'How many today?' asked the guard.

'Five,' answered the Kapo.

'That's not very many,' said the guard.

'I'll try to make it ten tomorrow,' said the Kapo. It had to do with the killing of prisoners." (86)

"I saw a Kapo hold the head of a deportee under water until he died." (89)

"I saw how an American of Italian ancestry, called C. L., born in August 1901 in New York, was abused and killed. He had frostbitten feet and was forced to work in spite of his condition. They bound his feet with paper and sent him back to work in the snow. He held out for 12 days before he died." (17)

"Some prisoners had the dangerous job of loading unslaked lime into a wagon. Since they had no shovels they were forced to handle the

lime with their hands. One windy day a young Israeli got lime dust in his eyes and complained to the SS guard, who took him aside and shot him." (39)

"Each person who died meant a 60 mark bonus provided that it happened during an escape attempt. For that reason the SS guards would take the headgear from one of the prisoners and toss it between two rows of barbed wire 10 yards apart, in a region that was considered an escape zone. Then they would order the owner of the headgear to go get it, and if the man obeyed and went into this zone, the guard in the watchtower would shoot him. If the man couldn't decide whether he wanted to retrieve his hat or not, the SS guard would sic the dogs on him, and they would literally tear him to pieces.

"The perimeters of the guarded area were changed frequently in order to make it easy for the prisoners to find themselves on the wrong side of the line without knowing it and be shot." (86)

"The prisoners were surrounded by SS guards who had the right to hit them, to let dogs loose on them that would bite them viciously, and to shoot them for any alleged attempt to escape. The SS guards of the camp exercised this right in brutal ways." (65)

"The foremen, common criminals themselves who had been hand picked, assisted in the torture of the internees as a way of pleasing the camp executioners and of enjoying certain prerogatives." (121)

"The work was overseen by a Kapo. He was responsible for the output of the prisoners and used beatings, whenever necessary, to make sure the work got done. He knew that if the workers' performance was not acceptable, he would himself receive 25 lashes; therefore, he had to prove that he had beaten the prisoners by pointing to the bruises on their bodies." (115)

"While we worked, we were continuously being beaten, either by the foremen or by the Kapos." (87)

"We were treated with extraordinary brutality. They beat us for no reason." (7)

"No matter whether you were a good worker or a bad worker, you got beaten anyway." (98)

"Once I saw two SS officers coming toward me in the tunnel. One of them swore at me and hit me in the face with his fist. I fell on the cement floor and lost consciousness. When I came to, he had disappeared. I never did find out why I had been hit." (31)

"The junior director of the mine used to visit the mines twice a week. He would sneak up on us and for no reason at all use his steel-tipped cane to hit us, one after the other, saying as he did that he was hitting us because we were Jews and that the Jews were responsible for the war. He said: 'We will kill all of you.'"

worked with us were not allowed to talk to us, they told us anyway that before our arrival they were the ones who got beaten, and that they were very happy to be replaced by the Jews." (33)

"We were warned that the Block leader was crazy and that we had to be careful in his presence. He would walk around carrying an enormous whip made of telephone wire nearly half an inch thick and use it on anybody he pleased." (7)

"From the vantage point of my work station, I noticed that many of the French prisoners who were put to work gathering and stacking wood appeared to be disabled. SS junior officers would walk up to them and start beating them until they collapsed. Then when they were lying on the ground, the SS officers would kick them in the stomach." (47)

"While the work was going on, the Kapo of Squad 'Petersen,' who was dissatisfied with the results of the work, ordered an internee to crawl on all fours while he hit him in the lower back with a heavy stake. The poor internee was taken to the hospital with three broken vertebrae and died within 48 hours." (86)

"Every day we had to go out into the fields to dig for potatoes. Ten hours work, on your knees. If a prisoner sat down on the ground or stood up, he would immediately be hit with an iron club. If he was not killed outright, he would most certainly sustain at least a broken arm or leg or a few ribs." (51)

"I can't tell you how many fractured ribs and split skulls I saw." (12)

"Work in the squad was always accompanied by kicks, punches, and blows inflicted by a rubber truncheon or billy club or the handle of a shovel." (87)

"With certain jobs the beating never ceased. For example, those prisoners who had to push wagons were struck by the SS guards every time they went past them. It was the same with the field workers who were constantly beaten by the SS guards. The prisoners assigned to these squads had no hope of ever coming back." (73)

"The SS overseers constantly reminded the prisoners that they would not get out alive. The prisoners lived in an atmosphere of perpetual dehumanization and fear. There, as in all the camps, many prisoners died from the consequences of repeated, senseless beatings." (108)

"Work always had to be done in double time." (43)

"Prisoners were absolutely forbidden to move in anything but double time." (93)

"We were not allowed to stand still for even a few seconds." (87)

"You always had to be in motion." (113)

"You had to run with a load that was unbearably heavy, considering the weakened state of the people. If somebody collapsed, the SS

front of you who collapsed, you had to step over him, or it meant your death." (43)

"If a person inadvertently slowed down and was taken by surprise, he would be punished. This punishment could take the form of anything from a few lashes with a whip to a long, grueling gymnastics session. Each poor performance was punished with a thrashing, usually 25 lashes on the buttocks. The victim, whose pants had been removed, would be held by two prisoners chosen by the SS guards, and ordered to count out loud as he received the lashes." (7)

"Those identified as Jews were singled out for particularly cruel abuse." (75)

"No matter what physical condition he was in, a Jew could not survive more than two weeks. For example, a Jew who was so efficient that he could do his work twice as fast (say, pushing a heavily laden wheelbarrow) would obviously not be able to keep up this pace. When at last he showed signs of slackening, he was sure to be struck dead by a blow from a shovel or a pickaxe." (104)

"Work in the stone quarries was real chain-gang labor." (121)

"At that time all Jews had to work in a field unit, climbing up and down the slope of a gravel pit in double time. Up above, SS guards and Kapos supervised their work and monitored the pace of their performance. If they thought that one of workers was 'dragging his feet,' they would wait until he was climbing upward and then simply give him a push and watch him slide with his loaded wheelbarrow all the way back down the slope. For the guards this was a favorite way of passing the time." (104)

"In the quarries there were almost no tools. The unfortunate workers had to transport huge stones on their backs. The exhausted internees had to do their work going up and down a staircase consisting of 108 steps that had been carved into the rocks of the quarry. As their strength gave out, they would very often stumble under their burdens, collapse, and end up crushed at the bottom of the pit. This happened when stones were being transported, some of which could weigh a couple hundred pounds. Four to six internees carried these on their backs and the least false step on the part of any of them and all was lost. This sort of accident, if one could call it that, occurred daily. I saw it happen twice myself." (121)

"In one shipment there were two of these unfortunate Jews, one of whom was a fourth-year medical student. These two friends were put together with the 20 Jews who were already there. They had to sleep under the bed where they were kicked and beaten with a bullwhip. They were assigned to a special squad of 'camp builders' who were involved in the construction of a clinic. The leader of this squad was a

personally for the death of all the Jews who were brought to the camp up until July 1943, at which time he went into the SS.

"One after the other, the Jewish internees were notified eight days before of the date of their death. If, in the meantime, the beatings were too severe, they would be suspended for a few days so that the victims would not die before their time. C. died, if I remember correctly, toward the end of June 1943.

"R., who had greater resistance and a marvelous inner strength, held out until the end of July, beginning of August. I visited him one evening after returning from work. Two days before his death he told me that the Kapos had told him that he was to be killed the day after tomorrow. The last two days became for him a true martyrdom. He refused to walk alone to the line beyond which one was shot. He was led there by the Kapo, and the guard fired the gun. The second bullet killed him. I saw myself how they treated his body. The camp registry bore the citation: 'Shot trying to escape.'

"Others were killed in the following way: They were forced to carry 200 pound stones down into a hole and then carry them back up a ladder, and after a day or two of such work they were given a rope to hang themselves with. If the prisoners refused to hang themselves, the Kapo would gladly give them a hand." (75)

"Almost every week there were executions for various reasons, from stealing a liter of soup to so-called sabotage. (Sabotage was impossible in the tunnel; every screw was inspected twice by Luftwaffe specialists.)

"There were numerous hangings, but what impressed us most by its gruesomeness was the simultaneous hanging of 32 prisoners, accused of sabotage, by means of an electric hoisting device. We were made to stand there and watch. The Kapos and the foremen would hit us if we stopped watching. The condemned went to their deaths with wooden gags in their mouths. The next day 56 more prisoners were hanged for reasons unknown to us." (91)

"I worked 14 months in a weapons factory during which time an act of sabotage occurred in the making of explosives. The Poles who worked there were hanged." (94)

"If you were exhausted some day because of overwork and the SS guard for some reason was not satisfied, you would be sent that evening to the gallows, then to the ovens." (51)

"In the evening we had to march back. If a man was dying, he still had to march. It was in this way that the brother of the publisher of an American newspaper died. We carried the dead comrades home. Each corpse was carried by four prisoners." (86)

"During my time in the quarry—i.e., until June 1944—not a day

passed that the prisoners did not return to the camp carrying the dead, who numbered anywhere from 2 to 10." (75)

"Because of abuse by either the SS guards or the Kapos, the internees often died of their injuries." (60)

"200 internees would leave for work and only 120 would return. If there were 150 of them in the evening, that was 30 too many. The Kapo ordered an internee to pick a number. If, for example, the number was 10, then, as the SS guard counted them off, every tenth man had to step forward. For each this meant death." (43)

"The director of a squad that was building an underground factory boasted he could kill off his workers in less than six weeks. Lack of sleep and food, enervating work, everything happening in double time. Those who fell behind were butchered on the spot. The few survivors were taken back to the so-called 'extermination block' of the camp where they died of exhaustion." (109)

"Inmates died like flies. They were piled up like sacks and waited a day or two until a special team with wheelbarrows came from outside to collect them." (7)

"The death rate was so high that in our group of 200 men, 30 to 35 died daily. Quite a few of them owed their death entirely to the beatings that the foremen and the Kapos administered for no reason whatsoever. The ensuing gaps in our own ranks were filled daily with other prisoners." (96)

"The highest death rate occurred among the squads that worked outside the camp. On January 2, 1945, Squad S III contained 3,000 men. On February 22, we learned that 1,500 sick deportees from this camp had been sent back to rest up. By the time they arrived at the train station, 200 of them were already dead. Between the station and the camp, another 160 died. At the end there were only 50 men left. In another squad, out of 4,000 Jews there were 3,600 dead." (84)

"Out of 1,800 prisoners, 600 died in 6 weeks. Elsewhere, in the course of three weeks, only 280 out of 1,800 remained alive." (117)

"Within 2 or 3 months the percentage of dead was between 70 and 80 percent." (63)

"The Jews accounted for 80 percent of the dead in the camp." (84)

"In reality, we were all sentenced to death. Only the interest the Germans had in our work gave us a stay of execution. All of us awaited the day when we would die of total exhaustion or suffocation in a boxcar or gas chamber or by some other means of extermination." (31)

WOMEN AT WORK

"It was a regular slave market. If the manager of a factory, for ex-

ample, needed 500 women, he would come to the camp and announce that he needed 500 women by a certain date. The whole Block would then be assembled immediately and we would line up in rows of five." (12)

"One after the other we had to file past a review board whose director acted like some kind of slave trader. He examined our eyes, our hands, even the way we walked, and then handed us a mysterious little piece of paper with the letters 'K.W.' and a number on it. This little piece of paper contained our work assignment." (45)

"In addition to the various kinds of camp labor they had to perform, women also staffed the offices." (28)

"Work that was too hard for the men was not unusual for the women. They laid rails, pushed small trucks, pulled rollers." (72)

"They were pipe layers and roofers; they repaired the laundry facilities." (28)

"They chopped wood, felled trees, unloaded ships, built roads, drained swamps, pulled rollers. I myself, together with 19 comrades, pulled a roller." (41)

"Many women were put to work mixing cement, or unloading sacks of concrete from freight cars, or shoveling coal." (125)

"In Hanover we worked for 'Continental,' in the department that made gas masks." (48)

"There were also weaving and sewing studios in the camp for making military uniforms and uniforms for prisoners and also for mending used uniforms, for the dead were stripped and their clothes recycled." (53)

"A lot of women were put to work ripping apart the uniforms of fallen German soldiers. They would have to work on these soiled items of clothing and then eat their soup with dirty hands." (109)

"Our plant made the left wings for Messerschmidts." (12)

"Many women worked in the Siemens factory (electrical appliances)." (67)

"My job consisted of drilling 8-millimeter holes in steel or aluminum with a 15-pound steam hammer. I had to hold this steam hammer in my hands the whole workday, which was 12 hours long." (12)

"All the women who did men's work, as well as those who did women's work—like, for example, weaving—were pushed so hard to work at peak performance that they were not allowed to raise their heads from their work for even one second." (41)

"It was assembly-line work, the pace of which was being constantly accelerated. If at the beginning the conveyor belt came full circle every three hours, at the end it was coming around every 40 minutes, which of

"To speed up production, the Germans used the following ploys: They promised prizes consisting either of money or Red Cross packages, both of which had been stolen from other internees in the first place. If a woman who was especially adept or had a special talent at her particular job achieved a higher level of production, she would get the prize. But the SS would then demand the same level of performance from all the other internees, arguing that if one person could do it, then there was no reason why the others could not do it, too." (95)

"The few French women who were offered such prizes refused them categorically. It was very noble of them when you realize that the prize consisted of food, which, while it might be of doubtful quality, was of tremendous importance in a camp where people were dying every day of starvation.

"In spite of everything, our production at one point dropped to almost nothing. Nevertheless, we were compelled to act as if we were working anyway or be shoved under a spigot of cold water.

"I am proud to say that the women I was with, all of us French political prisoners, were looked upon by our enemies as the worst possible workers." (120)

"The working conditions were terrible." (45)

"Twelve hours a day or 12 hours a night." (67)

"For 12 hours you were bent over a machine at hard labor." (120)

"Many women worked 14 hours a day; they got up at four in the morning and finished up toward six in the evening." (125)

"We ourselves had to work from eight in the morning until one the next morning." (12)

"When our group had the night shift, we got no more than three hours of sleep during the day. When we got back to camp, the overseer would find still more work for us to do: unloading potatoes, cabbages, and coal. There was always something to be unloaded." (48)

"A certain kind of truck was specially made to be pulled by women. Thirty of us were harnessed to it, and that was the way we transported coal." (85)

"And we still had to march off to work at night." (48)

"In the factory I was not allowed to sit down." (12)

"In August 1944, a sick comrade of ours named G. L. asked to be relieved from braiding rushes, a job which required her to stand all the time, and to be allowed instead to braid corn silk, which could be done sitting down. The overseer refused. A week later our sick comrade died." (51)

"During the first few months, I belonged to one of the teams draining swamps. Sometimes we had to work in icy water up to our knees remov-

"Naturally we had to work continuously. Women were sent out in temperatures of 20 to 30 degrees below zero to repair roads or remove snow to make the streets passable. To try to protect ourselves from the cold, we wrapped our feet in rags and paper." (28)

"We were routinely searched to see that we weren't hiding anything." (12)

"It was absolutely forbidden to put even the smallest piece of paper under your clothes to make yourself a little warmer or at least to feel a little less cold." (28)

"While I was very sick, my co-workers asked if the last machine, the one standing right next to the foreman, could be moved back so that I wouldn't feel a draught on my back from the open window; but in spite of their urging, the foreman refused this gesture of humanity, saying: 'It doesn't matter if she dies.'" (2)

"These poor women cried from hunger and thirst." (125)

"But they suffered most from thirst, if they weren't sick from something else. In the evening when I brought a bottle of water for my friends, I had to climb over howling women on the way. I knew how much a single drop of water would mean to them, but unfortunately I had to think first of the eight friends I had originally come there with." (10)

"During work we could use the toilet only at specified times. This restriction was particularly agonizing for us because we all had diarrhea.

"Our new work was taught to us by German civilian workers. Some weren't so bad, but most beat the women and denounced them to the Kommandant when the work was not flawlessly done, which resulted in more beatings and sometimes in a transfer to a disciplinary camp.

"The work was performed under the supervision of officers and overseers who abused us if we took a break or tried to hide from the Germans and who beat us and reported every possible disciplinary violation, particularly our gathering weeds and leaves to supplement our meager diets." (12)

"We were beaten for absolutely no reason whatsoever simply because the SS figured that the pressure to perform was not great enough. Whether you worked or not, it didn't matter. They beat you anyway.

"If a woman raised her head or slowed down on the job, an SS guard would hit her. One of them killed many of our comrades by knocking them down, hitting them with a wrench, and then kicking them to death." (41)

"Once I fell down three times because I couldn't go on. The SS guards used a whip to make us get up." (85)

"In every workshop one or two SS guards, wielding clubs, supervised

the workers and often beat them to death at the least sign of fatigue." (45)

"We were also supervised by SS matrons who beat us for trivial reasons. Some were particularly despicable. We gave them the following names: panther, predator, pug dog, chink, and fat cow." (48)

"When any of our comrades happened to use the toilet without permission, they were savagely beaten when they got back." (95)

"I saw one worker whose forehead had been split open by an SS matron who had hurled her against a sewing machine merely because she spoke." (81)

"I saw SS matrons beat female prisoners to death with a whip." (82)

"The internees were not only constantly beaten by the SS guards but were also bitten by dogs." (72)

"The SS, who hit us with rifle butts and bullwhips, often sicced the dogs on us."

"These dogs were vicious; they were ravenous and bit with all their might." (14)

"The women were so terribly afraid of them that they were sick with fear the whole day long." (95)

"The dogs were also turned loose in the sleeping quarters to make sure that we got up." (41)

Chapter 7

Sanitary Conditions

ILLNESSES

"Sickness broke out in the camp. During March and April there were many cases of typhus. Many died. I don't know the exact number because the dead were hidden until nightfall at which time they were buried in the woods behind the camp.

"Some of the diseases included in the epidemic were typhus with skin rash (spread by lice), pneumonia, erysipelas, scarlet fever, and, worst of all, tuberculosis.

"Very often the disease would run its course so swiftly that the patients died within three to four weeks. Not counting the cases of dysentery, 40 percent of the autopsies showed that the patient had died of tuberculosis.

Lung Diseases. Extremely common. 40 percent died from pneumonia alone. (1,950 Danes in something like 60 days.) I treated 41 cases of pneumonia. The pneumonia was particularly bad, while the pleurisy proved fatal in three out of four cases.

Dysentery. Two epidemics, the first mild, the second severe (50 to 60 percent fatalities).

Diarrhea and Enteritis. Very often they accompanied other diseases and hastened the death of the afflicted persons.

Abscessed Wounds. Very frequent.

"In April 1945 there were approximately 2,400 beds occupied in the hospitals and annexes. In addition, there were more than 2,500 patients in dire need of surgery or medical attention. Many of the acutely or chronically ill were not hospitalized.

"In other words, at least 10,000 beds would have been necessary at the beginning of April 1945. More accurate is the number of dead I

amounted to well over 4,000. The death toll for each month was as follows: 2,000 in January, 5,400 in February, 5,623 in March; i.e., more than 13,000 in three months." (80)

"Almost all of the prisoners died of diarrhea or its consequences or as a result of their dreadfully weakened physical condition." (90)

"By the thousands they succumbed after a while to that most fatal of illnesses: tuberculosis. In my group alone, there were many victims." (103)

"Many young female prisoners died very quickly of tuberculosis. Usually the sick and those whose performance was not satisfactory were sent back to the camp, and I learned of the deaths of most of them in the days that followed." (12)

"Other illnesses cropped up such as malaria, which was allegedly carried by the Greeks. To try to stem this epidemic, they simply sent all the Greek women in the Block to the gas chamber with the excuse that they were carriers of the disease. Soon thereafter all malaria victims were ruthlessly gassed, and I escaped this measure only by a miracle. I had malaria, but when they were drawing blood, they took blood twice from my neighbor. I was, therefore, saved and evaded the gas chamber." (10)

"Countless female deportees who had been out working on the earthworks, particularly the ditches being built to retard the advancing allied armies, came back with completely frozen limbs or with gangrene. On orders of the German nurses, we were told to stick them in one corner of the room and not bother ourselves about them. They could not be operated on. They were mostly Hungarian-Jewish women and they all died." (32)

"I had to bandage horrible wounds caused mainly by beatings. The immune system was too weak to resist infection, and the sores and abscesses were difficult to care for, especially in the case of the Jews. The sores were hideous to look at; the streptococci and staphylococci ate away at the muscles and even the bones. The muscles melted into a form of pus that was nauseating.

"According to what a specialist told me, the composition of the soil on which the camp was built had something to do with the attraction and concentration of strep and staph bacilli. For that reason, many of the newly arrived prisoners did not have time enough to become acclimatized and died of sepsis. An example of this was 1,800 men of the Danish police who had been fed by the Danish Red Cross and had not been forced to do hard labor. They had trouble adjusting, and after three months in the camp, all but 56 had died of blood poisoning.

"Many prisoners suffered from hemorrhoids, the result of lying for hours on wooden floors or cold earth while being transported to the camps. There was a high percentage of tumors, caused mainly by lack

of nourishment." (90)

"Sickness increased as a result of poor nutrition and unbearable living conditions. Severe stomach disorders and an apparently incurable foot disease spread throughout the camp. The victims' feet would become so swollen that it was impossible for them to walk." (104)

"There were many cases of inflammation of the trachea and the lungs, of dysentery, and of dilation of the cardiac muscles, all of which led to debilitation and almost certain death." (71)

"I could diagnose many sickness from the corpses. In about 70 percent of the bodies examined, pleurisy had taken hold as a result of inflammation of the pleura and the thorax. The hearts of almost as many bodies showed signs of pericarditis.

"80 to 90 percent of the bodies exhibited atrophy of the heart muscles as a result of poor nutrition and extremely low blood pressure. Many of them also showed signs of deterioration of the kidney membrane and other organs brought on by inflammation and hemorrhaging. All of this was the direct result of beatings by SS guards who, having a predilection for those parts of the body, administered their blows especially to the area of the lumbar region.

"The stomach of one corpse was particularly characteristic. It was grossly protracted, its lining smooth as glass as a result of watered-down food." (90)

"The average life span of a prisoner was about six months." (80)

"A French Jew from Yon told me that he had come with a shipment of some 5,000 Jews from France and that only 5 of them were left; most died of typhus. Another Polish Jew told me that from one shipment of 5,000 Jews, only 200 were left." (125)

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

"We regularly had to undergo very unpleasant medical examinations. We were made to strip naked in in the courtyard in all kinds of weather." (24)

"These examinations were purely a formality, since the doctor examined five prisoners a minute. You would pass before him naked with outstretched hands, and the doctor would look at you between his fingers and say, 'Good.' We were asked about our occupations. I said, 'university professor' and was designated 'movable.' I also mentioned that I had had polio. On my card this was simply noted as 'childhood illness.' On the basis of this examination many of my countrymen were taken away." (54)

"As part of the routine arrival examination, we had to undress in a hallway. We appeared naked before the doctor and had to proceed out

legs and raise our arms high; that was it. Even if you told him that you were sick, it didn't matter." (61)

"We women had to appear naked at four in the morning in the courtyard and submit to an examination by two Germans who passed themselves off as doctors. They inspected the soles of our feet, our hands, and our teeth. Later they extracted something from our vaginas, a procedure for which we did not have to undress. There was a young girl among us, a virgin, who was deflowered in this manner." (12)

"One of the examinations took place in February. We waited outdoors by the thousands. Finally, we filed past a German major who was sitting on a table and mockingly sizing us up." (28)

"Those who were sick and did not stop immediately in front of him or who were not fast enough in taking off their pants were hit in the pit of the stomach." (35)

"One night, weakened by hunger and cold, I suddenly got a severe attack of leg cramps. I was taken to the hospital where the head physician accused me of malingering. He tried to force me to stand up, but I was not up to it, so he hosed me down for half an hour with water that was not only icy but suffocating because he sprayed it directly into my face and mouth." (87)

"I saw 65-year-old men undressing outside in the rain and waiting 20 to 25 minutes before they could go in for their examination, and then having to put their soaked clothes on again before returning to the Block. It goes without saying that many deaths ensued from such treatment." (63)

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATIONS

"In principle, the sick did not go to work but remained in the camp where they endured such torture that finally no one declared themselves sick; they simply either didn't or couldn't get up in the morning or could no longer walk." (121)

"The decisions of a French doctor who was known to prescribe rest for a worker were superseded by one of the German medics who would routinely send 200 to 300 men to work who were too weak to do the job." (108)

"Those prisoners who were beaten by the guards or bitten by the dogs were not allowed to receive any first aid or any kind of help.

"When a Jew had an accident, he was given first aid when necessary. But those who were helped went to the gas chamber as soon as they were healed." (35)

"Even the dying could not all be admitted to the rooms designated for the sick in this place that called itself a hospital." (31)

"Often there was no room in the hospital. Then the sick came back to the Block and died there. Two or three people died each day who could not be admitted to the hospital." (80)

"The gathering of the corpses occurred in the following manner: Roll call took place every day in front of the barracks. The internees were ordered to undress the dead and to bring the naked corpses of their comrades with them to roll call. After roll call, a dump truck would drive through the camp and collect the dead, who were then transported to the crematory." (106)

SICKROOM CONDITIONS

"The infirmary: the building to which the dying were sent to die." (106)

"It was a herding together under terrible conditions. The ward I worked in from December 25, 1944, until April 1945 had 44 beds. We had as many as 152 patients. Most of these patients had tumors, running sores, or diarrhea.

"I saw one patient with a tumor on his leg that had been repeatedly kicked. In one night these injuries brought about the gangrene from which he died. A shortage of medical supplies made it impossible to care for those suffering from diarrhea and impossible to keep them clean. All one could do was help them to the toilets, lay them on the floor, and run a lot of water over them. And there was no way of drying them. In an emergency, you could use the blankets, but it was impossible to dry them, which meant that you would have to put them back on the bed soaking wet.

"It turned out that patients were even more abused in the wards than they were anywhere else in the camp. The SS doctors didn't bother themselves about all these details; they simply let things run their course." (75)

"The first night, the prisoner next to me died, and I had to lie next to his body for 36 hours." (57)

"One evening my bedmate died around 11 o'clock, and I had to remain lying next to him under the same blanket until the following morning." (9)

"They took the women with contagious diseases and laid them in the beds of the uninfected." (24)

"My ward contained about 100 patients who were squeezed into this cramped space without mattresses, without towels, and practically without blankets." (78)

"Everything seemed to be calculated to see that the spreading of the infection was accomplished with the greatest possible speed." (57)

"Before our arrival in Compound 13, Gypsies had lived there who had contagious diseases such as scarlet fever, erysipelas, and dysentery. Their sleeping bags were neither disinfected nor changed. One month after our arrival, all 400 of the women interned in this compound were sick, and many began to die. Among the first was a pregnant woman in her eighth month who had traveled under horrible circumstances. She died, as did her child, who had been born in the meantime." (48)

"By order of the camp commander, all prisoners-of-war who came to the sick bay for observation were put exclusively in the barracks inhabited by the patients with virulent tuberculosis." (110)

"People in varying stages of illness lay mixed together on a thread-bare straw mat. Some were feverish, others were very sick with diarrhea. Some died, others were taken seriously ill. From time to time someone would carry a body out and deposit it at the entrance to the sick bay. The street crews came and got them." (57)

"The rations for the sick were carefully allotted, but they were intended for only 200 patients per day, while at least 5,000 patients per day needed to be taken care of. Many patients died of hunger." (84)

"As nourishment, the patients received watered down soup and weak tea; that was all." (125)

"We had 150 dead per day and the bodies were sent to the crematory." (117)

"The number of dead was staggering; I think there were 1,500 in November 1944." (31)

"Within 19 months, 8,500 patients died in the camp, at least 1,900 of them French." (31)

"The death rate amounted to about 60 percent per month." (78)

MEDICATIONS

"There were no medications for disinfection, no sterilized instruments or bandages." (86)

"No help from outside was allowed. Every offer of help from the International Red Cross or from the French Red Cross was turned down by the Nazi authorities." (92)

"Remedies were totally lacking, and most of the time the doctors could provide neither an aspirin tablet nor anything else. Countless prisoners died from a lack of sulfa drugs or as a result of the impossibility of receiving a heart stimulant." (64)

"For diphtheria (which I had in September 1944) there was little or no serum. The German SS doctors declared at the time that Germany was the country that produced the most serum in the world, but it was

not intended for us.

"It was especially in the sick bay that you could tell you had wound up in an extermination camp, for all around you people were dying of diarrhea and exhaustion. In my ward of 100 patients, 6 to 8 died each day. Absolutely paralyzed people were brought in who were no longer able to speak their names. They'd be given a shot of oil of camphor, but they didn't respond and died almost immediately. They would then be carried away to make room for others who were dying." (75)

"I was confronted with a very bad epidemic of dysentery. We had practically no available medication of any kind with which to combat this epidemic that eventually killed off thousand of victims." (78)

CARE AND HANDLING OF THE SICK

"They didn't treat us properly, and although we were housed in the sick bay, we received no medication except for an aspirin tablet." (63)

"I saw a patient next to me die unattended from blows that had caused a wound in her lower back. This woman had gone 40 days without nourishment except for a sip of acorn coffee in the morning." (42)

"Among many others, I particularly remember a former French minister who died as a result of a lack of medical care." (84)

"Everything was arranged on the part of the German doctors to bring about accidents. When Doctor M. attended a consultation, he prodded the prison medical personnel to speed up their work, their surgical dressings, and their auscultations, while he ran around in the sick bay screaming like a madman. He drove the doctors as if he were the Kapo of one of the Blocks." (57)

"On April 10, 3,000 patients of all nationalities arrived at the camp from Lublin. The treatment in the sick bay, the hygiene, and the disciplining (at roll call they had to remain lying in filth) had got so much worse that two months later scarcely a third of them were still alive." (102)

"I personally witnessed scenes of sickening brutality in the convalescent compound. Those who were recovering from an operation or an illness and were too weak to work were put in Compounds 38 and 39 and isolated from the rest of the camp. They were abused by the leader of their compound, beaten, and thrown out of bed, deprived of food, and subjected to incessant roll calls." (19)

"One morning one of our comrades had a fever and could not get up. He was lying in the third tier of the bunks, more than six feet high, when the barracks orderly climbed up and threw him down on the floor." (59)

"A 54-year-old prisoner was forced, in spite of the weather and with a fever of 104, to sing and to walk; he died on August 7, 1944." (4)

"One of my comrades from Rouen had contracted a common edema and heart ailment as a result of which his health appeared to be ruined. The overseer S. ordered him one morning to empty his chamber pot even though he by no means had the strength to do it. The poor wretch had to kneel down, in spite of his condition, and try to do as he was told. When he got to the door of his cell, he fell and broke the pot whereupon the overseer immediately flew into a rage and struck out wildly, knocking him back into the cell. Two hours later my friend was dead.

"I was actually a witness to the following event: Another comrade, gassed in the 1914 war and suffering from tuberculosis, found himself for about a year in miserably poor health; he was spitting blood and had withered away to a skeleton. In the shower he trembled when he stood under the cold water. Guard D., a German of French ancestry, doused him with a bucket of icy water, with no regard whatsoever for his condition. His illness got worse immediately and he died shortly thereafter.

"Guards S. and E. repeatedly conspired to punish inmates by methodically throwing them into jail in order to accelerate their debilitation. Many died as a result of this kind of treatment." (52)

"A German who no longer had the strength to clean himself or control his bowels was dragged outside, stripped naked in 10-degree weather, and cleansed with a broom and a bucket of icy water. He died the next day of a hemorrhage." (83)

"One comrade who had sustained a fracture was brought to the hospital where he was first given a cold shower; then he underwent an operation on the fracture without an anesthetic. He suffered very much and had to remain for five weeks in the hospital during which time he received almost nothing to eat. After his release from the hospital, he was assigned to a squad of crate haulers. When the fracture recurred, he asked the SS guard if he could give him somewhat lighter work. With his bullwhip the guard struck him in the face, especially in the mouth, causing his teeth to come loose. Afterwards he was taken to the sick bay where the camp dentist pulled his teeth and split the gold with the SS guard." (39)

"One evening I saw 18 patients being brought back on the shoulders of their comrades. Two SS guards put them in the recovery room, an unheated room with windows left open for 'ventilation' even though the temperature was below zero. They remained without assistance because the guards went to the movies. Eleven died during the night and five the next day; only two remained alive." (17)

"An SS guard named M. was in charge of the camp medical services

and a real monster. To work up an appetite for breakfast he would single-handedly strangle two or three patients." (94)

"Even outdoors the sick could find no rest because the 'torture boys' forced them to run around in circles. Those who could no longer stand on their feet or be budged from where they fell were overwhelmed with blows from truncheons and clubs or sadistically beaten with canes." (121)

"One evening the guards had the 'so-called sick' (about 400) come outside. In bitter cold weather they were stripped and taken to the showers where they received alternating hot and cold showers that ended with an icy shower that lasted 20 minutes. Then they were left outdoors naked for an hour. The operation was repeated the whole night through. In the morning only 40 prisoners were still alive. These were beaten to death with axe handles." (39)

"In their diabolical sadism the young SS 'torture boys' of the camp were constantly devising new atrocities. For months they amused themselves by using the heads of patients for target practice. Countless patients were killed in this way." (38)

"60 to 70 deportees or more died in the sick bay. Before they had even drawn their last breath, many of them were stripped naked and thrown out into the snow. One of them called out for two hours for his mother." (39)

"On December 5, 1943, a group of 80 patients arrived from another camp. On the orders of the German doctor, all of them were stripped and forced to spend the night out in the open. The orderly was then ordered to pour buckets of cold water on them. After this night the majority of these prisoners died." (86)

"The infirmary was a place from which you never saw anyone come back alive." (45)

INOCULATIONS

"One day in March, 1945, the Kommandant asked the head doctor the following question:

'How many deaths do you have per day?'

'30,' said the doctor.

'That is not enough,' the Kommandant replied. 'I need 150.'" (49)

"The sick were no longer acknowledged. Those who came in for a checkup or went on sick call, or those who were already admitted to the sick bay, were not allowed to leave. No one was allowed to come out alive." (47)

"Eight days later we reached 220 deaths per day." (49)

"When we arrived at the camp the infirmary had been destroyed."

get sick, don't go to the infirmary, don't tell anyone that you are sick." (43)

"French prisoners told me that it was very dangerous to go on sick call." (55)

"After several attempts the phenol was injected into the heart." (86)

"One week after I arrived at the camp, the head of the compound, Doctor G., a Pole, but recorded as a 'Reich German,' sent for me and my partner, Doctor K., a Slovakian prisoner, led us into his office where SS Sergeant K. sat at a table, and asked me if I would administer the inoculations. When I agreed, a doctor in a white coat, himself a prisoner whose nationality I don't know, said to me: 'I will show you what you have to do. Here is a 5 cc syringe and a needle used for puncturing the lumbar region. You have to put 5 cc of this fluid in the syringe. Be careful not to spray any of it in your eye, for one drop would be enough to blind you.' They were using phenol.

"He had no sooner said it before he had filled the syringe and ordered two naked prisoners to come forward; they were still wearing their belts and were holding bread in their hands. The doctor then said to me: 'Be sure to take careful aim. You have to place the index finger of your left hand on the nipple and your middle finger on the edge of the breastbone, then probe up and down and from left to right, because in spite of what you think, the heart is on the right side. You must draw some blood first to make sure that you are really in the heart cavity and then inject the fluid.' It was no sooner said than done, and the man who a moment before had been sitting on a chair right there in front of him keeled over dead at his feet." (82)

"Many were killed by injections of phenol in the heart." (35)

"Countless prisoners who were very sick and did not have much longer to live received inoculations in the infirmary that killed them in 10 minutes. Their bodies were then slid down a chute to the ovens. At least 5 men died per day and sometimes 30." (1)

"The SS doctors withheld the medical charts of those considered incurable or afflicted with a deadly disease. That meant that the prisoners in question would be killed with a heart injection in the afternoon or evening." (90)

"The sick prisoners who could no longer work or had swollen legs because of malnutrition were examined by the chief physician during morning consultation and sent in groups to Block 20. There they were told that at the entrance to the infirmary they would either take a shower or be deloused. In truth they were taken to a special room where they were told to sit down on a chair. One medic would take the prisoners by the arm, another would cover their eyes with his hand,

victims would die in a few seconds. The number of prisoners killed by inoculations like this was estimated at 25,000." (86)

"The Greek Jews with malaria or typhus were ordered to report it. In spite of our repeated warnings, many of them obeyed. All of them died from phenol injected into their heart by a junior officer of the medical corps." (104)

"Countless patients were brought to the infirmary where they were given an inoculation; the next day all were dead." (39)

"Out of 800 patients there were sometimes 100 to 150 deaths in one single night. Sometimes I would see maybe 15 comrades arrive at Block 61, and 3 or 4 days later they would all be dead." (78)

"When the German doctors visited the compound and determined that the patients had typhus with skin rash, they gave them inoculations or used them for experimentation. Naturally we tried to conceal as many cases as we could by inserting the entry 'influenza' on the temperature chart in place of 'typhus with skin rash.'

"In June 1943 a small brick annex was built next to the infirmary of Block 8 and connected to the infirmary by a door. This room served as a storage place for the bodies of those in the infirmary who had been injected with a dose of 10 cc of phenol." (35)

"All the patients were divided into two groups: 'Aryan' and 'Jewish.' These groups were divided into subgroups. The first included those patients who were considered curable and should remain in the hospital. The second consisted of patients who were extremely weak from chronic dysentery and from hunger or injuries and who could be cured only by a long stay in the hospital. The members of this group were condemned to death by phenol injections in the heart. Race also played an important part. An Aryan had to be really seriously ill to be sentenced to death by inoculation, while 80 to 90 percent of the hospitalized Jews were 'taken care of' in this way. Many of them were aware of these methods and asked for permission to be a 'suicide candidate,' since they didn't have the nerve to hurl themselves against the high-voltage wires." (104)

"In the infirmary I witnessed the murder of many 'unpleasant' patients. One with dysentery, for example, fouled his sleeping bag; he got an injection of evipan, a dose of 1 g per 10 cc of water. These intravenous inoculations, injected rapidly, brought about immediate death. There was also sepsis, an imitation iodine; an inoculation of 40 cc caused death in 20 minutes. I learned that in Buchenwald some victims had their hearts injected with gasoline and even petroleum." (86)

"To speed up the deaths of the prisoners in Block 7—something I saw with my own eyes in August 1942—over a hundred patients were left lying almost naked in an open field, exposed to the sun. They were also

with death lasted two to three days. Among those who were murdered in this way were my uncle and my brother-in-law.

"If for some reason the camp authorities had not already arranged some other form of execution, the head of the compound gave his underlings the order to kill off dozens of patients during the night in one of two ways: either a cane was pressed down on the throat of the prostrate patients while two men jumped up and down on either end, resulting in strangulation; or the patients were asked to bend over and then were beaten on the back of the head. The patients would lose consciousness and then be clubbed to death." (35)

"Prior to the installation of gas chambers, the sick were disposed of systematically by means of an injection of phenol acid into the heart, given by an SS noncommissioned officer, or by mass shootings (mainly for the Russians)." (93)

"To the left walked the healthy, to the right the others who were led to the infirmary where they received an inoculation (for Dachau had no gas chambers); then they went to the ovens." (20)

"If anyone in the compound was found to have dysentery, they were automatically sent to Block 61 where they immediately received, instead of help, an inoculation (which was lethal). This way they liquidated all the sick by means of injections in the heart. They had built a small barracks for the administering of these inoculations. It was dangerous to show any interest in Block 61, for then you looked suspicious and might be sent there never to return. 3,000 prisoners arrived at Block 61 in January, 5,400 in February, and nearly 5,000 in March. With the approach of the Americans, the compound disappeared for fear of a possible investigation." (7)

"I had left behind a friend in Block 61, a German anti-Fascist who spoke fluent French, had lived in France, been arrested by the French police, and had been turned over to the Reich by Pétain. He kept me up to date on what was happening in the compound, which no one was allowed to enter at certain hours, especially at noon and between 3 and 4 o'clock.

"He told me—and I was able to confirm this in the days that followed—that he was certain that people had been killed in this compound with injections in the heart. Most of the victims were part of the regular shipments of prisoners. All those who were suffering from dysentery or were suspected of having typhus were herded into the infamous enclosed courtyard, a place I managed to infiltrate twice.

"As an orthopedic assigned to the sick bay, I visited this friend of mine in Block 61 whenever I could. Twice I was really fearful, for I arrived at the moment when they were 'operating.' I felt especially threatened by a German Kapo by the name of H. who came to my cell every night after my visit and told me never to return to

Block 61, or else. . . .

"Both these times I saw naked prisoners in the courtyard (it was 12:30 p.m.). There were about 50 of them lined up, mostly dysentery patients, their bodies completely covered with excrement.

"My friend told me the manner in which the executions were carried out. The SS Adjutant W. and one other officer would do the selecting. Each prisoner who was able to work would be admitted as a patient and sent to his sleeping quarters. The others, between 80 and 100 each day, would have to undress and then go, one after the other, into a room whose furnishings I have already described. There L., assisted by a Polish nurse named M., would give them injections in the heart.

"My friend told me that the victims collapsed after a few seconds and that two other Poles would drag the bodies into an adjoining room while the next victims were already filing in. So in a matter of minutes a large number of people were 'transferred' from life to death.

"In the evening a special detail of hand-picked Polish orderlies would throw the bodies into a cart and haul them off to the ovens. Identification was superfluous, since all the bodies bore a number painted on with aniline dye.

"Of the sick who were being treated in the compound, those whose illness dragged on were condemned to death." (47)

"Countless prisoners in this condition were put to death by means of so-called 'euthanasia injections.'" (169)

ABORTIONS

"Pregnant women in the second or third month were given a scrape; those in the fourth to the seventh month were given a colpohysterotomy (a sort of lower cesarean section).

"After this operation the woman would be exhausted and anemic as a result of malnutrition and the trauma of the operation. In roughly 10 days the patients were sent back to the camp where they would spend a few days. After a visit from the doctor, who would declare them unfit to work, they would be sent to the gas chamber." (35)

"The method preferred by the doctors was mechanical abortion. The doctor killed the fetus by means of a stab in the head, then attached a cord to it with a weight hanging from one end. The woman, who was tied to the bed, had only to wait for the emergence of the fetus.

"After the doctor had performed his operation, he would allow his patients to linger in terrible pain. The nurses assured me that the pain lasted anywhere from 2 to 10 hours." (1)

"Pregnant women in the seventh or eighth month were given subcuta-

birth. These injections worked. The fetus, whether it came into the world alive or dead, was eliminated. The goal was to induce premature birth by means of injections without mechanical means." (86)

BIRTHS

"Sometimes they let nature take its course and the child would be born in the infirmary." (123)

"As soon as the children were born, they were taken away from their mothers and wrapped in cloth or paper. Then they were taken to Section 3 and lined up in a box, in rows of three, four, five, or six, like kittens or puppies one wants to do away with. The Red Cross ambulance that picked up the sick from the various camps to take them to be gassed also picked up these newborn babies, who were then tossed in among the sick like so many useless bundles." (57)

"If a baby was born dead, the mother would eventually be returned to the camp where, like all the other inmates, whether or not she got sent to the ovens was a matter of pure chance. If, on the other hand, the baby lived, then the two of them would be sent to the ovens together." (123)

"A difficult problem—and a real crisis of conscience—faced the doctors who happened to be internees themselves. If a child died at birth, the mother escaped death. The question then was: Should a healthy baby be sacrificed to save the mother's life? The fact that this was frequently done to save the mother was a reality that shocked many people. The mothers, however, accepted rather easily the sacrifice of their babies as a way of saving themselves.

"You see, the physical and spiritual agony we suffered and the insidious atmosphere of the camp had irrevocably altered our mental outlook." (57)

STERILIZATION OF THE WOMEN

"Sterilization was performed." (35)

"The women were sterilized. In 1944, sterilization equipment was brought into the women's compounds while the women were outside the camp. The number of sterilized women was very high. Sterilization of the women was effected by means of X-rays." (86)

"I saw comrades who were sterilized, I can give you their names."

(82)

"I saw sterilization of Gypsies and Jews." (17)

also the German prisoners who had been caught committing the crime of fraternizing with the foreign workers." (32)

"Sterilization of the women was performed (after an unsuccessful attempt at cauterization) by an operation. Women and even children were brought to me in my section (Block 9 - Surgery) who were left to lie there with open stomachs that had not been sewn up after the operation. We didn't have any kind of bandaging we could use, and only twice a week were we allowed to make bandages out of tissue paper which, after an hour, was torn and shredded. Their wounds were made worse by coming in contact with soiled and lice-infested blankets, while the straw in the mattresses, not to mention the mattresses themselves, was befouled with the excrement of the diarrhea-stricken patients." (32)

"I personally saw several hundred sterilized women, many of whom died of peritonitis." (26)

"I think they also sterilized children, for they took the female contingent between the ages of 7 and 45. That happened in January 1945. They sterilized them without anesthetic, and the children screamed." (41)

"I took particular care in that I used old washcloths to bandage a little girl of 12 who had been sterilized." (32)

STERILIZATION AND CASTRATION OF THE MEN

"In 1943 and 1944 the Germans selected a number of young men of Jewish origin the moment they arrived at the camp. They were between 13 and 16 years old. On the pretext of learning the skill of bricklaying, they were assembled in Block Number 7 where the brick-laying course was taught. Apparently, these 500 to 600 young people were chosen to be sterilized after they had spent a certain number of months in the camp on a particular diet." (86)

"In Block 21 they castrated the Gypsies." (90)

"Thousands of young Greeks were sterilized by means of an electrical device. If after a few months they were still able to perform sexually, they were castrated." (94)

"The Germans performed widespread sterilization and castration on young internees singled out in the camps at Birkenau and Auschwitz." (86)

"One morning I was recalled to Auschwitz from Birkenau. It was May 19, 1943.

"I was taken to the disinfection area where all my clothes were removed and I was given a new camp uniform. Then I was sent to the

"The next day I was forcibly placed on the operating table, and they tried to give me an injection in my spine. I resisted and succeeded in breaking the syringe, but they overpowered me, 12 to 1, and gave me the injection. Shortly thereafter I felt paralyzed in my lower limbs. It should be pointed out that the same doctor performed operations of complete castration on hundreds of the internees, mostly young people between 20 and 30 years old." (29)

"M. C. saw and can verify that the Germans amputated the sex organs of countless young Israeli men and boys." (39)

"Many priests were castrated; they unflinchingly died as a result because the castrations were performed by nondoctors who had no concept of the principles of surgery." (90)

"What was the purpose of all this sterilization and castration?

"It was probably geopolitical. This probability is based on the following: 25 years after the war (assuming Germany won it), the space now occupied by 80 million Germans would not be sufficient to feed and house an additional 15 to 20 million Germans. The Nazi rulers wanted to expand their 'Lebensraum' at the cost of contiguous countries such as France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Ukraine. The populations of these regions would, for 25 to 30 years after the sterilization, supply the necessary laborers and then, without offspring, would disappear. It was in these regions, emptied of their native inhabitants as a result of sterilization, that the Germans planned to accommodate their excess population.

"These young men chosen to be sterilized were 18 to 35 years old, all of them strong and, when possible, without afflictions. Lying on a plank, each of them had to expose his scrotum to the effects of the X-rays. The doctor himself examined them to make sure that the testicles had receded into the scrotum and not into the groin. The treatment with the X-rays lasted five to six minutes. This time lapse had been established after a great many tests.

"After the treatment, the young men, whose number and date of sterilization had been entered in a special register, were returned temporarily to the camp. The clerk in the orderly room received a list with their names and numbers and they were exempted from selection until further notice.

"Either a few weeks or months after sterilization, the young men in Auschwitz, Block 21 (surgery), would be taken into a laboratory where they were questioned about the symptoms of any 'problems' since the sterilization: sexual desire, nocturnal emissions, indigestion, memory loss, depression, etc. . . . Then they were forced to masturbate and to catch a drop of semen on a small plate for microscopic examination. If the physiological prerequisite for masturbation was lacking, then an erection was achieved by massaging the prostate.

"After a few such treatments the Germans found that the massage tired out the masseur, so they found another system by means of a crank which was inserted into the anus of the poor patient. A few turns of the crank were enough to bring about an erection and the discharge of semen. The semen then underwent a bacteriological examination to determine the vitality of the sperm, assuming it lived long enough.

"In 1944, the Germans brought a special microscope to the camp that they called a 'fluorescent microscope' and that operated on the principle that a living cell could phosphorize whereas a dead one could not. That allowed them to separate dead sperm from live." (86)

"Castration was not always complete. Sometimes they amputated the entire scrotum, sometimes a quarter, sometimes a half or a third, according to the instructions and the purposes of the doctors.

"In other cases castration was two-sided; that is, total.

"The testicles, or a fragment thereof, were placed in a tube sterilized with 5 to 10 percent formalin and shipped to an institute in Breslau for the study of tissue.

"I myself was once present at two castrations.

"The incision was made in the groin, a one-sided or two-sided incision depending on whether it was a total or partial castration. They stretched the testicle muscle, extracted the testicles, tied the blood vessels, and proceeded to the removal of parts of the testicles. Then they sewed them up with a few stitches.

"After the operation the young men were placed in Room 5 of Block 21 under the supervision of one of the German orderlies specially trained to care for patients following that sort of procedure.

"After a stay of 8 to 10 days, the patients were placed in Room 1 of Block 21, where I was the attending physician.

"For many, healing took place without suppuration; for others there was suppuration followed by all sorts of complications that lengthened the patients' stay in the surgical wing and put them in danger of being 'selected.'

"In many cases the castrated who had been sterilized by the physical method came to the surgical wing with seemingly normal phlegmonen in the groin. In two cases, careless opening of the phlegmonen resulted in death from sepsis.

"It is reasonable to assume, from the systematic extermination of the Jews in the camp, that sterilization was tried on them with the intention of applying it to non-Germans, non-Jews." (86)

THE GERMAN MEDICAL STAFF

"The internees with medical degrees were not treated as doctors. . . .

primarily as corpse bearers. Those who actually did function as doctors were SS personnel who usually had had only very limited medical training . . . and we served under their command." (93)

"I was under the command of a German orderly who was a noncommissioned officer. He would arrive at consultations with a stick in his hand and beat the prisoners. One day he asked me if I would mind giving some injections of tetracycline in order to kill certain prisoners, because in his opinion there were not enough dead in the camp.

"The medical unit was staffed and run by German prisoners, none of whom had professional credentials or were either doctors or nurses. The head Kapo was a former German convict and the others were carpenters, butchers, and shoemakers. But they were the ones who decided on the admission or rejection of the sick. Take, for example, the case of Professor Richet, who ran a department but who was now being supervised by a former German carpenter. All this occurred with the knowledge of everyone, including the SS, and with the approval of the chief physician of the camp." (78)

"My boss, who 10 years earlier had been a blacksmith, was now head of the department. He simplified his job by using standardized diagnoses that he merely copied out and sent to Berlin. He didn't worry about the rest. He had about eight ready-made pathology reports that he regularly copied and randomly assigned to each corpse." (90)

"Surgical work was handled by a German who professed to having been a Berlin surgeon. He was really just an ordinary prisoner who killed his patients right and left out of sheer incompetence." (17)

"The medical personnel consisted of an Aryan German infirmary director who had been a pipe fitter in civilian life and who performed all the surgery." (87)

"The leadership of the compound was in the hands of two German orderlies, unscrupulous people who, assisted by a bricklayer named H., performed operations on the spot. In fact, H. rather liked to perform major operations anytime, anywhere, and had once amputated a leg that had only a minor infection." (47)

"In late 1943 and early 1944, an operating room was outfitted in which major surgery took place. In order to get some practice, Doctor T. ordered all prisoners with fractures to be operated on. After these operations, he made choices among his patients, declaring most of them unable to work and sending them to the gas chamber.

"Some of the staff doctors in the hospital tried once to hide a few patients. Doctor T. threatened them with death if they ever tried such a thing again. The same Doctor T., in order to get more practice, also ordered women to be operated on for fibroma and all sorts of gynecological growths." (35)

'In Block 21 (the surgical Block), the doctors 'practiced.'

"Every prisoner of Jewish ancestry who complained about stomach troubles was subjected immediately to all the routine examinations: blood tests, examination of the gastric juices, tests for blood in the stool, etc. Independent of the outcome of this examination, it would often be declared that the victims had stomach ulcers and would have to be operated on. After the operation, these people did not receive the care their condition required, not even a milk diet. A few days later these victims died in the gas chamber.

"Doctor K., who received his degree in 1943, wanted to learn various methods of amputation; so instead of making a small incision to remove a tiny growth in a finger, for example, he would cut the the whole finger off. In the case of a growth on the leg, K. performed amputations according to a variety of surgical methods where just a tiny incision would have sufficed. The victims always ended up in the gas chamber anyway.

"Among the recent arrivals in the camp, P. chose those with fractures and operated on them according to the standard methods presented in the German handbooks." (86)

"The room for septic surgery was always entrusted to German internees who had no professional expertise. These people were responsible for the deaths of an incredible number of prisoners as a result of inappropriate surgical operations which were performed on patients simply for the purpose of medical experimentation." (20)

"The chief physician of the camp performed operations at whim and usually without anesthetic (amputations, castrations, ovariectomies, etc.); 8 out of 10 of those operated on died of sepsis." (109)

"We laid a young man on a stretcher who had umbilical hernia, and a young SS doctor, who had never before operated, wanted to practice on him. I took the young man into the operating room and learned from the stretcher bearer who carried him out that he had died that same evening." (90)

"Many German doctors operated conscientiously, but I saw instances, too, where after an ulcer operations, they would bring the patient meat and potatoes. A short time later they would send him to the gas chamber." (35)



**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

Directory of Major Concentration Camps

| CONCENTRATION CAMP | LOCATION | TYPE OF CAMP | OPERATION | CLOSURE | PRESENT STATUS |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AUSCHWITZ BIRKENAU | Poland | Annihilation; Forced Labor | April 1940 January 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Camp Preserved |
| BELZEC | Poland | Annihilation | March 1942 June 1943 | Liquidated by Germany | Monument |
| BERGENBELSEN | Germany | Holding Center | April 1943 April 1945 | Liberated by UK | Graveyard |
| BUCHENWALD | Germany | Forced Labor | July 1937 April 1945 | Liberated by USA | Camp preserved; Museum |
| CHELMNO | Poland | Annihilation | December 1944 April 1943; April 1944 January 1945 | Liquidated by Germany | Monument |
| DACHAU | Germany | Forced Labor | March 1933 April 1945 | Liberated by USA | Camp preserved; Museum |
| DORA/MITTELBAU | Germany | Forced Labor | September 1943 April 1945 | Liberated by USA | Memorial Sculpture Plaza |
| FLOSSENBUERG | Germany | Forced Labor | May 1938 April 1945 | Liberated by USA | Buildings; Monument |
| GROSSROSEN | Poland | Forced Labor | August 1940 February 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Camp Preserved; Museum |
| | | | | | |

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|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| JAN WSKA | Ukraine | Forced Labor; Annihilation | September 1941 November 1943 | Liquidated by Germany | Not Maintained |
| KAISERWALD | Latvia | Forced Labor | March 1943 September 1944 | Liquidated by Germany | Not Maintained |
| MAJDANEK | Poland | Annihilation | July 1941 July 1944 | Liberated by USSR | Camp Preserved; Monument |
| MAUTHAUSEN | Austria | Forced Labor | August 1938 May 1945 | Liberated by USA | Buildings; Monument |
| NATZWEILER/ STRUTHOF | France | Forced Labor | May 1941 September 1944 | Liquidated by Germany | Camp Preserved |
| NEUENGAMME | Germany | Forced Labor | June 1940 May 1945 | Liberated by UK | Used as Prison; Monument |
| ORANIENBURG | Germany | Holding Center | March 1933 March 1935 | Liquidated by Germany | Not Maintained |
| PLASZOW | Poland | Forced Labor | December 1942 January 1945 | Liquidated by Germany | Not Maintained |
| RAVENSBRÜCK | Germany | Forced Labor | May 1939 April 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Buildings; Monument |
| SACHSENHAUSEN | Germany | Forced Labor | July 1936 April 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Museum; Buildings |
| SOBIBOR | Poland | Annihilation | May 1942 October 1943 | Liquidated by Germany | Monument |
| STUTTHOF | Poland | Forced Labor | September 1939 May 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Buildings; Museum |
| TEREZIN (THERESIENSTADT) | Czech Republic | Holding Center Transit Ghetto | November 1941 May 1945 | Liberated by USSR | Buildings; Monument |
| TREBLINKA | Poland | Annihilation | July 1942 November 1943 | Liquidated by Germany | Monument |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| WESTERBORK | Netherlands | Transit Camp | October 1939 April 1945 | Liberated by Canada | Monument |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------|

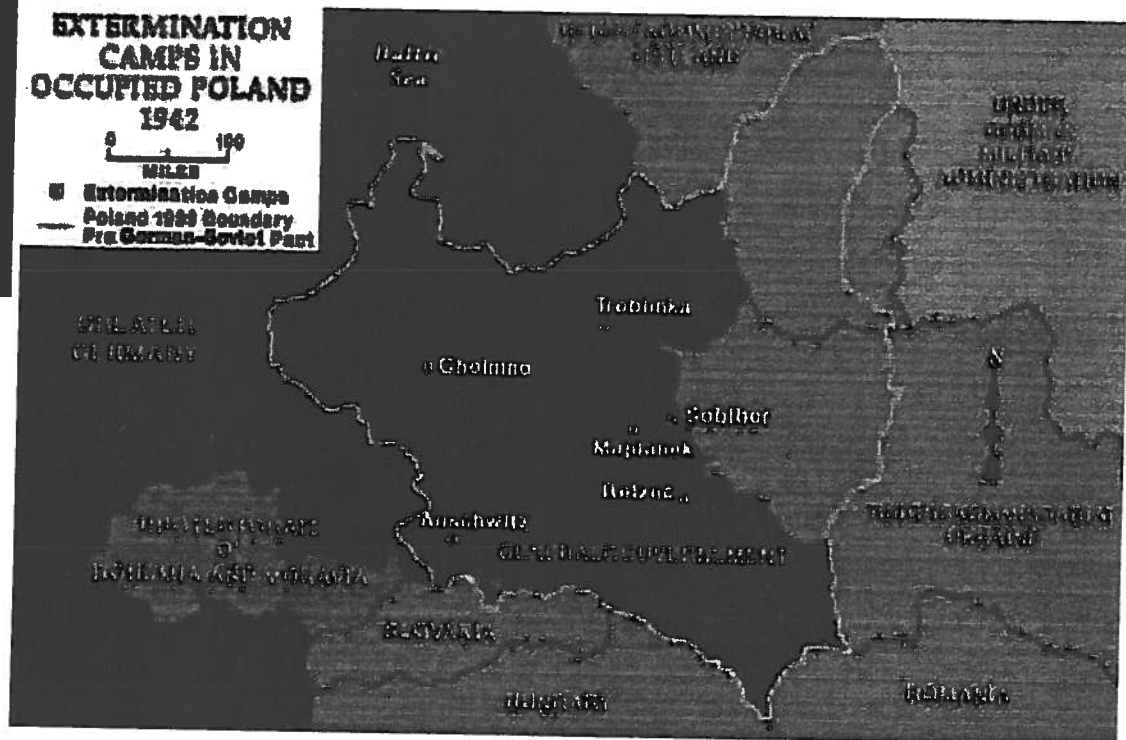
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The Jewish Student Online Research Center (JSOURCE)

Extermination Camps in Poland



Extermination camps were killing centers designed to carry out genocide. Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis established six extermination camps in former Polish territory--Chelmo, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz-Birkenau (part of the Auschwitz complex), and Majdanek. Chelmo and Auschwitz were established in areas annexed to Germany in 1939. The other camps (Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Majdanek) were established in the Generalgouvernement (General Government) of Poland. Both Auschwitz and Majdanek functioned as concentration and forced-labor camps as well as killing centers. The overwhelming majority of the victims of the extermination camps were Jews. An estimated 3.5 million Jews were killed in these six extermination camps as part of the "Final Solution." Other victims included Roma (Gypsies) and Soviet prisoners of war.

Source: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

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APPENDIX IV

Witness to The Holocaust. Michael Berenbaum. Harper Collins.
New York, 1987.



XV: CHOICELESS CHOICES

In a painful and powerful work, *Versions of Survival*, Lawrence Langer, the distinguished literary critic, introduced the notion of "choiceless choices" as a way of comprehending the victim's dilemma. The victims were caught in the horns of an impossible dilemma. They were forced to choose between the unimaginable and the impossible. The choices they made exceed our capacity for moral judgment. Langer argues that in the concentration camps, the Nazi's so dominated the victim that we cannot speak of moral choice. In the universe of choiceless choices, one could not choose between good and bad or even a lesser of two evils, but between the impossible and the unacceptable. In the morally denuded atmosphere of the death camps, a system of meaning evaporated and we have no means by which to judge the behavior of the victim. In the readings that follow, one by a Jewish physician who found herself in Auschwitz and the other by a rabbi who tried to make decisions on the basis of precedent whether a father could ransom his son from a *selektion*, knowing that another would be chosen in his place, we will find it impossible to judge.

The fate of Gisella Perl paralleled that of Hungarian Jewry. As an ally of Nazi Germany, Hungary remained independent through March of 1944. While Jews were subject to persecution and discrimination under Hungarian rule, they were not deported. Until 1944, Hungary would not participate in "the Final Solution to the Jewish problem"—at least not with respect to Jews within Hungarian territory.

By March of 1944, it was certain that Germany would lose the World War. The Soviet army was pushing westward, and the Allies had moved from North Africa into Italy. An invasion of the continent from the West was imminent. Distrustful of their ally, the Germans feared that Hungary would seek a separate peace and switch sides. Thus, in March, the Germans took effective control of Hungary and immediately implemented the Final Solution at a breathtaking pace. Between March and May, Jews were defined according to the Nuremberg law, based on the religion of their grandparents. Their property and wealth was expropriated; they were forced to wear the yellow star. Finally they were herded into ghettos.

Enter Adolf Eichmann, whose herculean logistical efforts succeeded in deporting more than four hundred thousand Jews in seven weeks beginning on May 15, destination Auschwitz.

A native of Sighet, Elie Wiesel's hometown, Perl was an accomplished physician when she was deported to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944. Trained as a gynecologist, she continued to serve as a doctor in Auschwitz and thus to struggle with the life and death decisions characteristically faced by all physicians under unprecedented, extreme conditions. Her memoir, *I Was A Doctor in Auschwitz*, pains the reader for it illustrates the

anguish of the victims. She writes of the basics: life and death, hunger and cold, survival and despair, inhumanity and dignity.

Primo Levi, an Italian Jew who was a contemporary of Perl's in Auschwitz, wrote of the need for a new language of atrocity.

Just as hunger is not that feeling of missing a meal so our way of being cold has need of a new word. We say "hunger," we say "tiredness," "fear," "pain," we say "winter" and they are different things. They are free words created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the Lagers had lasted longer, a new, harsh language would have been born, and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind, with the temperature below freezing, wearing only a shirt, underpants, cloth jacket and trousers, and in one's body nothing but weakness, hunger and the knowledge of the end drawing near.

If such a language were to be developed, Gisella Perl's experience would be essential to its creation.

She writes of hunger:

We waited for food with the same burning impatience, the same excited imagination with which a young girl waits for a lover, the only moment worth waiting for . . .

Our tortured stomachs hurt more and more at the thought of food, our salivary glands worked overtime and we could already feel the smell of food in our noses before it arrived. . . .

The containers were dirty and smelly. . . . We didn't care. It was warm and it was food, even if there were pieces of wood, potato peeling and unrecognizable substances swimming in it. . . .

Ten miserable mouthfuls and it was over. We were hungrier than before.

Dr. Perl writes as a woman of the fate that befell her gender. She writes directly of sexual exploitation, rape, the trading of favors, and of the singular suffering of mothers and children.

Perl is at once a healer and a murderer. She describes in vivid detail the birth of Yolanda's little boy. She hid the child for two days, "unable to destroy him."

Then I could hide him no longer. I knew that if he were discovered it would mean death to Yolanda, to myself and to all these pregnant women whom my skill could still save. I took the little body in my hands, kissed the smooth faced, caressed the long hair—then strangled him and buried his body under a mountain of corpses, waiting to be cremated.

Her tone bespeaks love, gentility, softness; her deed is infanticide, or is it? The healer must choose between one child and many women. The physician's ordinary responsibility is, "above all do no harm." There is safety in such guidance, moral protection, but what of its applicability to the world of Auschwitz?

Perl also depicts the arbitrariness, the whimsical, unpredictability of life in Auschwitz. For a time, women with infants are both condemned to die. Thus, the women are saved and the infants discarded. Then Dr. Mengele—another sort of physician—announced a

new policy, women with children are not to be killed, thus both the mother and her offspring can be saved. Shortly thereafter, both were shipped to their deaths and no efforts could alter the fate of those condemned to die.

Rabbi Zevi Hirsch Meisels of Vac, Hungary, was asked to decide an impossible question. He was approached by a father whose son was chosen in a *selektion* with an inquiry. Was it permissible, the father asked, for him to ransom his son. Unspoken was the certainty that another child would be chosen in his stead so that the number of victims were equal and no guard was in trouble. The rabbi refused to respond; he begged the question repeatedly refusing to answer. He could neither sanction the deed nor did he wish to prohibit the switch and force the father to accept the death of his son. His refusal was understood by the pious Jew. What could not be sanctioned was forbidden. For Rabbi Meisels, not to decide was to decide. His silence illustrates the choiceless choice; the father asked for a choice and for clarity. He accepted the loss of his son as a sacrifice required for faith.

The third document is a letter written by a mother to an unknown woman on how to care for her child. The mother understood that she and her husband could no longer protect the child, that remaining with the child was to condemn the child. Her choice was to let the child go to an unknown destination, to the care of someone she did not know, whom she could not know. She pleads that the child be taken care of. She provides incentive for such care—a promise for payment in the future—and she cannot resist being a mother, giving specific instructions for her child's care.

EXCERPTS FROM *I WAS A DOCTOR IN AUSCHWITZ*

Gisella Perl

BLOCK VII: THE LATRINE

Before we knew what went on in there, it was the ardent desire of all of us to be admitted to Block VII. This block was considerably cleaner, and better built than the others. Rain did not seep through the roof, the cages were more solid and even the air was cleaner. Block VII was the "Worker Block" and it housed fewer women than the others.

One morning a group of unknown SS officers and women appeared at the morning roll call. Their visit resulted in a new kind of "selection," in which the young, the pretty, the well-built were pulled out of the ranks, not the weak, the old and the sick-looking. Out of the thirty thousand inhabitants of Camp C about

seven hundred young women were selected. The others watched in silence, not knowing whether to pity or envy the chosen ones. We followed them with our eyes and saw that they were being herded into Block VII, the Worker Block.

The camp was soon seething with rumors. We heard that somewhere, far away, there was a radio factory in the middle of a forest and that's where these women would go to work. We did not know that the story about the radio factory was carefully planted among us. We did not know that all these fairy tales about the privileges accorded to those who were taken away for work were only part of the ghastly joke played on us.

About four weeks later an SS physician

came to Camp C and with a group of strong-arm SS men entered Block VII and locked the door from the inside. No one was permitted to go near the block. We still had no idea of what was happening, but waited with fear and curiosity in our hearts.

A few hours later the doctors of the hospital were sent for. The sight which greeted us when we entered Block VII is one never to be forgotten. From the cages along the walls about six hundred panic-stricken, trembling young women were looking at us with silent pleading in their eyes. The other hundred were lying on the ground, pale, faint, bleeding. Their pulse was almost inaudible, their breathing strained and deep rivers of blood were flowing around their bodies. Big, strong SS men were going from one to the other sticking tremendous needles into their veins and robbing their undernourished, emaciated bodies of their last drop of blood. The German army needed blood plasma! The guinea pigs of Auschwitz were just the people to furnish that plasma. *Rassenschande* or contamination with "inferior Jewish blood" was forgotten. We were too "inferior" to live, but not too inferior to keep the German army alive with our blood. Besides, nobody would know. The blood donors, along with the other prisoners of Auschwitz would never live to tell their tale. By the end of the war fat wheat would grow out of their ashes and the soap made of their bodies would be used to wash the laundry of the returning German heroes . . .

We were ordered to put these women back on their feet before they returned to camp so as to make place for others. What could we do without disinfectants, medicines, liquids? How could we replace the brutally stolen blood? All we had were words, encouragement, tenderness. And yet, under our care, these unfortunate creatures slowly returned to life and they even smiled when saying: "This is still better than the crematory . . ."

Block VII was always full. Once it was the women with beautiful eyes who were told to come forward, once the women with beautiful hands . . . And the poor wretches always believed the stories they were told, came forward, and to

the amusement of the SS henchmen gave their last drops of precious blood for the German soldiers who used the strength robbed from us to murder our friends, our relatives, our allies . . .

One of the basic Nazi aims was to demoralize, humiliate, ruin us, not only physically but also spiritually. They did everything in their power to push us into the bottomless depths of degradation. Their spies were constantly among us to keep them informed about every thought, every feeling, every reaction we had, and one never knew who was one of their agents.

There was only one law in Auschwitz—the law of the jungle—the law of self-preservation. Women who in their former lives were decent self-respecting human beings now stole, lied, spied, beat the others and—if necessary—killed them, in order to save their miserable lives. Stealing became an art, a virtue, something to be proud of. We called it "organization." Those who were working near the crematories had an opportunity to "organize" an occasional can of food, a pair of shoes, a dress, a cooking pot, a comb, which they then sold on the black market operating in the latrine for food, for special favors, and—if the buyers were men—for "love."

But among those who had no connections among the crematory workers there were many who "organized" the piece of bread of their neighbor, regardless of whether she might starve to death as a consequence, or "organized" their bedfellow's shoes, no matter if her bleeding feet would condemn her to be cremated. By stealing bread, shoes, water, you stole a life for yourself, even if it was at the expense of other lives. Only the strong, the cruel, the merciless survived. The SS were, of course, greatly amused by these practices and encouraged them by showing special favors to some, so as to awaken the jealousy, the hatred, the greed of the others.

A few privileged persons were tacitly permitted to own small aluminum drinking cups stolen from the crematory. Such a cup made it possible for them to get more water than the others who could only drink from their cupped hands. These cups were jealously guarded, their owners carried them on a piece of string tied around their

waist. After they filled it with water, they would seek out a quiet corner where they could enjoy their long drink in peace. But more likely than not, they would not succeed. No sooner had they found a lonely spot than one of the strongest, most brutal fellow prisoners would sneak up behind them, hit them over the head to rob them of their water and their cup. Many survived these attacks, but others, who had a thin skull or had no resistance left, lost their lives for a drink of water and an aluminum cup . . .

The latrine—without water, of course—was one of the most important places in Camp C. It was our community hall, the center of our social activities and our news-room. In the second month of my stay in Auschwitz the tiny hut which served as a latrine was closed down and a whole block was consecrated to this worthy purpose. Ditches were dug along the walls and wooden planks thrown across the ditches. In the middle of the building ran a wide passage and this is where the latrine superintendents walked up and down with filthy clubs in their hands, hitting those who spent too much time satisfying their urges or talking to their friends.

The latrine was also our black market, our commodity exchange building. Here you could buy bread for your sausage, margarine for your bread, exchange food, shoes, a piece of cloth for "love" . . . It was here that we made plans for the future, gave expression to our despair, to our thirst for vengeance, our hatred. It was here that we heard all rumors, the good and the bad, and sometimes, miraculously, they proved to be true. Sometimes I feel that if it hadn't been for the latrine we would all have gone crazy in the deadly monotony of camp life.

Once in a while an SS woman came to inspect the latrine and chased us out with her whip and gun. Such an inspection had many victims, many casualties, but the next day our club life would continue, as if nothing had happened.

The latrine also served as a "love nest." It was here that male and female prisoners met for a furtive moment of joyless sexual intercourse in which the body was used as a com-

modity with which to pay for the badly needed items the men were able to steal from the warehouses. The saltpeter mixed into our food was not strong enough to kill sexual desire. We did not menstruate, but that was more a consequence of psychic trauma caused by the circumstances we lived in than of saltpeter. Sexual desire was still one of the strongest instincts and there were many who lacked the moral stamina to discipline themselves.

Detachments of male workers came into Camp C almost daily, to clean the latrines, build streets, and patch up leaking roofs. These men were trusted old prisoners who knew everything there was to know about camp life, had connections in the crematories and were masters at "organizing." Their full pockets made them the Don Juans of Camp C. They chose their women among the youngest, the prettiest, the least emaciated prisoners and in a few seconds the deal was closed. Openly, shamelessly, the dirty, diseased bodies clung together for a minute or two in the fetid atmosphere of the latrine—and the piece of bread, the comb, the little knife wandered from the pocket of the man into the greedy hands of the woman.

At first I was deeply shocked at these practices. My pride, my integrity as a woman revolted against the very idea. I begged and preached and, when I had my first cases of venereal disease, I even threatened to refuse treatment if they didn't stop prostitution. But later, when I saw that the pieces of bread thus earned saved lives, when I met a young girl whom a pair of shoes, earned in a week of prostitution, saved from being thrown into the crematory, I began to understand and to forgive.

Our SS guards knew very well what was going on in the latrine. They even knew who was whose *kochana* (lover), and were much amused by it all. They were always amused by what was insane, filthy, bestial, horrible . . . The man-eating furnaces were burning, their flames were licking the sky . . . Millions were dying on their feet eaten up alive by lice, hunger, disease—and in the latrines, lying in human excrement before the eyes of their fellow prisoners,

men and women were writhing in sexual paroxysm. Hitler's dream of a New Order.

CHILDBIRTH IN CAMP C

The poor, young women who were brought to Auschwitz from the various ghettos of Hungary did not know that they would have to pay with their lives and the lives of their unborn children for that last, tender night spent in the arms of their husbands.

A few days after the arrival of a new transport, one of the SS chiefs would address the women, encouraging the pregnant ones to step forward, because they would be taken to another camp where living conditions were better. He also promised them double bread rations so as to be strong and healthy when the hour of delivery came. Group after group of pregnant women left Camp C. Even I was naive enough, at that time, to believe the Germans, until one day I happened to have an errand near the crematories and saw with my own eyes what was done to these women.

They were surrounded by a group of SS men and women, who amused themselves by giving these helpless creatures a taste of hell, after which death was a welcome friend. They were beaten with clubs and whips, torn by dogs, dragged around by the hair and kicked in the stomach with heavy German boots. Then, when they collapsed, they were thrown into the crematory—alive. I stood, rooted to the ground, unable to move, to scream, to run away. But gradually the horror turned into revolt and this revolt shook me out of my lethargy and gave me a new incentive to live. I had to remain alive. It was up to me to save all the pregnant women in Camp C from this infernal fate. It was up to me to save the life of the mothers, if there was no other way, then by destroying the life of their unborn children. I ran back to camp and going from block to block told the women what I had seen. Never again was anyone to betray their condition. It was to be denied to our last breath, hidden from the SS, the guards and even the Blockova, on whose good will our life depended.

On dark nights, when everyone else was

sleeping—in dark corners of the camp, in the toilet, on the floor, without a drop of water, I delivered their babies. First I took the ninth-month pregnancies, I accelerated the birth by the rupture of membranes, and usually within one or two days spontaneous birth took place without further intervention. Or I produced dilatation with my fingers, inverted the embryo and thus brought it to life. In the dark, always hurried, in the midst of filth and dirt. After the child had been delivered, I quickly bandaged the mother's abdomen and sent her back to work. When possible, I placed her in my hospital, which was in reality just a grim joke. She usually went there with the diagnosis of pneumonia, which was a safe diagnosis, not one that would send her to the crematory. I delivered women pregnant in the eighth, seventh, sixth, fifth month, always in a hurry, always with my five fingers, in the dark, under terrible conditions.

No one will ever know what it meant to me to destroy these babies. After years and years of medical practice, childbirth was still to me the most beautiful, the greatest miracle of nature. I loved those newborn babies not as a doctor but as a mother and it was again and again my own child whom I killed to save the life of a woman. Every time when kneeling down in the mud, dirt and human excrement which covered the floor of the barracks to perform a delivery without instruments, without water, without the most elementary requirements of hygiene, I prayed to God to help me save the mother or I would never touch a pregnant woman again. And if I had not done it, both mother and child would have been cruelly murdered. God was good to me. By a miracle, which to every doctor must sound like a fairy tale, every one of these women recovered and was able to work, which, at least for a while, saved her life.

My first such case was the delivery of a young woman called Yolanda. Yolanda came from my hometown. She was the child of an impoverished family and made a living by doing fine embroidery on expensive underwear, handkerchiefs and baby clothes. To make beautiful baby clothes was the greatest pleasure in her life and, while work-

ing on them until late into the night, she would dream about the baby she, herself, would one day have. Then she got married. Month after month she waited and prayed, but Nature refused to grant her most ardent wish. This is when she began coming to me. I treated her for a long time until finally my treatment showed results and Yolanda became pregnant. She was radiant. "I shall give you the most beautiful present in the world when my baby arrives . . ." she would then tell me every time we met.

In the end it was I who gave her a present—the present of her life—by destroying her passionately desired little boy two days after his birth. Day after day I watched her condition develop, fearing the moment when it could be hidden no longer. I bandaged her abdomen, hid her with my body at roll call and hoped for a miracle which would save her and her baby.

The miracle never came, but one horribly dark, stormy night Yolanda began having birth pains. I was beside her, waiting for the moment when I could take a hand in the delivery, when I saw to my horror that she fell into convulsive seizures. For two days and nights the spasms shook her poor, emaciated little body and I had to stand by, without drugs, without instruments to help her, listening to her moans, helpless. Around us, in the light of a few small candles I could see the thirteen-hundred women of her barracks look down upon us from their cages, thirteen-hundred death-masks with still enough life left in them to feel pity for Yolanda and to breathe the silent but ever-present question: Why?

The third day Yolanda's little boy was born. I put her into the hospital, saying that she had pneumonia—an illness not punishable by death—and hid her child for two days, unable to destroy him. Then I could hide him no longer. I knew that if he were discovered, it would mean death to Yolanda, to myself and to all these pregnant women whom my skill could still save. I took the warm little body in my hands, kissed the smooth face, caressed the long hair—then strangled him and buried his

body under a mountain of corpses waiting to be cremated.

Then, one day, Dr. Mengele came to the hospital and gave a new order. From now on Jewish women could have their children. They were not going to be killed because of their pregnancy. The children, of course, had to be taken to the crematory by me, personally, but the women would be allowed to live. I was jubilant. Women, who delivered in our so-called hospital, on its clean floor, with the help of a few primitive instruments that had been given to me, had a better chance to come out of this death camp not only alive but in a condition to have other children later.

I had two hundred ninety-two expectant mothers in my ward when Dr. Mengele changed his mind. He came roaring into the hospital, whip and revolver in hand, and had all the two hundred ninety-two women loaded on a single truck and tossed alive into the flames of the crematory.

In September 1944, Camp C was liquidated to make place for new arrivals. I shall tell, later, what this liquidation meant. All I want to say here is that out of thirty thousand women only ten thousand remained alive to be put into other blocks or taken to Germany to work.

As soon as we were installed in Camps F, K and L, a new order came from Berlin. From now on, not only could Jewish mothers have their children in the "maternity ward" of the hospital but the children were to be permitted to live.

Eva Benedek was eighteen years old. She was a violinist from Budapest, a beautiful, talented young woman who was separated from her husband only a few days after her wedding. Eva Benedek believed with an unconquerable faith that her life and the life of her child would be saved. The child, growing in her womb, was her only comfort, her only pleasure, her only concern. When the SS organized an orchestra among the prisoners Eva became the violinist of that orchestra. I bandaged her abdomen and in her formless rags, amidst women whose stomachs were constantly bloated with undernourishment, her condition went unnoticed.

Then came the "liquidation" of Camp C and Eva Benedek came with me to Camps F, K and L. When the order for the conservation of Jewish children came, nobody was happier than she. Her delivery was only a day or two off and we both believed that the miracle had happened, a miracle of God for the sake of Eva Benedek. She smiled all day and in the evening, in our barracks, she whistled Mozart concertos and Chopin waltzes for us to bring a little beauty into our terror-filled, hopeless lives. Two days later she had her baby, a little boy, in the "maternity ward." But when the baby was born, she turned her back on it, wouldn't look at it, wouldn't hold it in her arms. Tears were streaming down her cheeks incessantly, terrible, silent tears, but she wouldn't speak to me. Finally I succeeded in making her tell what was on her mind.

"I dare not take my son in my arms, Doctor," she said. "I dare not look at him, I dare not kiss him, I dare not get attached to him. I feel it, I know it, that somehow they are going to take him away from me . . ."

And she was right. Twenty-four hours after Eva Benedek had her son, a new order came, depriving Jewish mothers of the additional food, a thin, milky soup mixed with flour, which swelled their breasts and enabled them to feed their babies. For eight days Eva Benedek had to look on while her son starved slowly to death.

His fine, white skin turned yellow and blotched, his smooth face got wrinkled and shriveled and on the eighth day I had to take him out and throw him on a heap of rotting corpses.

A RESPONSUM BY RABBI ZEVI HIRSCH MEISELS

Whether a Father May Ransom His Son from
Certain Death at the Expense of Another Life

INTRODUCTION

Whether one life may be spared at the possible or certain expense of another is one of the most chronic and agonizing questions to emerge from the responsa of the Holocaust era. The complex aggregate of legal sources bearing upon this question and its intrinsic dilemmas are discussed in responsum 6 by R. Shimon Efrati. Since R. Efrati's opinion was solicited some time after the fact, he had both the time and the clarity of mind to formulate a thoughtful and thorough reply. In contrast, the following account by R. Zevi Hirsch Meisels of Vac (Hungary) describes how the ultimate question of whose life takes precedence was submitted to him twice in a situation of utter extremity requiring immediate response. In such circum-

stances the rabbi's ruling is obviously no mere theory but a prescription for action (*Halakah le-mu'aseh*). R. Meisels's decision, in these two instances, was literally a matter of life or death.

The descendant of a distinguished line of rabbis, R. Meisels lived in Vac (Ger. Weitzen), Hungary, before the war. After the German invasion (19 March 1944) the Jews of Vac were deported to Auschwitz. Of the prewar population of two thousand Jews, only a few survived including R. Meisels. After the war he was appointed chief rabbi of the British zone in Bergen-Belsen. Later he emigrated to Chicago where his volume of responsa, *Mekaddeshei ba-Shem*, was published.

DIGEST

R. Meisels describes a "selection" conducted by the Nazis at Auschwitz in which some fourteen hundred boys of less than an arbitrary height

were singled out for death. Some camp inmates sought to ransom certain boys by bribing the guards. However, the guards would not release any boy without capturing another to take his place. This trading in lives went on throughout the day.

The father of one of the condemned boys, aware that his son could be ransomed only at the expense of another life, asked R. Meisels whether under the circumstances the Torah permitted a father to save his son's life. R. Meisels did not wish to render an explicit decision in a capital case, especially without access to books of law, the counsel of other rabbis, or the calm objectivity necessary to make such a ruling.

Still, R. Meisels wonders whether or not there might be some rationale for permitting the ransom. The isolated block in which the boys were confined was guarded by Jewish inmates who presumably might refrain from the grave sin of condemning another boy in the place of the ransomed one. As long as the exchange had not yet occurred, it might be permissible for the father A. Zevi Hirsch Meisels to ransom his son on the assumption that another boy might never be captured.

However, it was the guards' procedure to capture a replacement before releasing a ransomed captive, nullifying this line of argument.

Reluctant to render a definite Halakic ruling (*pesak din*), especially in such a calamitous circumstance, R. Meisels refuses to answer the father's question. From the rabbi's refusal the father concludes that the ransom of his son is Halakically forbidden.

TEXT

One thousand four hundred imprisoned children condemned to be burned.

May the generations be horrified and consciences stirred to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, as I tell publicly of the fearful and exalted things my eyes beheld at Auschwitz on Rosh Hashanah and Simhat Torah; the magnitude of self-sacrifice, the sanctifica-

tion of God's name by fourteen hundred boys, fourteen to eighteen years old, who were chosen on the day of the eve of Rosh Hashanah (in a "selection") to be sacrificed upon the altar, to be burned for the sanctification of God's name.

I will not go on at length with stories like these, for the paper would run out and they would still not suffice. Much ink has already been spilled in writing about the events and calamities of the days of the Nazis, may their names be blotted out. Each person writes according to his intellect, understanding, and perception in order to derive benefit from the fruits of his pen. But I will not refrain, for the sake of the glory of the sanctification of His blessed name, from bringing up here in the introduction to *Mekaddeshei ha-Shem* this incident that I myself saw, from among an ocean of incidents and events that were engraved upon my heart and mind, which I personally witnessed while under the yoke of the Nazis. I promise to be brief even though it is possible to go on and on. So I begin with the help of God, may He be blessed.

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah [17 September 1944], the Nazi guards and their helpers in the camp seized and assembled the boys of eighteen years of age or less who were still scattered throughout the camp, who by various methods and pretexts had managed to elude the inspection of the Nazi camp commander, may his name be blotted out, when [the Nazis] entered the camp. About sixteen hundred boys were assembled in an empty lot behind the camp blocks, and all of them knew the destiny that awaited them. (My dear son Zalman Leib, may his light shine, a boy of fourteen years who was with me at Auschwitz, was saved by a miracle with the help of God, may He be blessed. He was not taken with the other youths.)

Then the Nazi camp commander came there and ordered that a wood pole be sunk into the ground, and at the top of the pole a board laid [horizontally across] and fastened with nails so that it appeared like a kind of letter dalet [ד]. He then gave the order that all the boys pass by one by one under the board. Those whose heads

touched the board remained alive and were sent back inside the camp; but those whose heads did not touch the board were taken separately into a closed block. In this way the enemy estimated for himself their ages and their fitness for work. Since the boys knew what the failure to touch the board meant—that whoever failed to touch it was considered a child and condemned to be burned—many of them rose up on their toes at the moment they passed beneath the board so that their head would touch it. But this oppressor stood near them, and the instant he saw anything like this—a boy elevating himself to touch the board—he struck him hard on the head with the heavy rubber club in his hand, with such force that the unfortunate boy would drop to the ground covered with blood and die right there; or else if he were still barely alive they would take him this way straight to the crematorium. This happened to many of the boys.¹

After this examination and procedure, about fourteen hundred boys remained on the site, and they were taken immediately to an isolated locked block until the next day when their doom would be sealed. They received nothing more to eat or drink. The *Kapo*² guards stood at the entrance, and no one could go out or in.

Trading Lives with the Kapos

The next day, the first day of Rosh Hashanah, when all the people of the world pass before [God] like sheep, there was panic and confusion. By word of mouth the news spread throughout the camp that on that evening they would take the boys away to the crematorium (since during the day they did not bring new victims to the ovens, but only during the night). In the case of many people in the camp, their only children, the only survivors left to them, were among these boys condemned to be burned; or else they had close relatives or beloved friends from their own towns [among the condemned boys]. These people ran around bewildered all day outside the closed block. Perhaps a ray of light would appear to rescue their beloved child from there before the sun went down.

But the *Kapo* guards paid no attention to all their pleas and tears to release this or that boy from among the prisoners condemned to burn. As is known, most of these *Kapos* were wicked and hardhearted, the dregs of the wicked among our people. Yet in this instance their argument was somewhat justified, since they were liable for the number of boys they had been ordered to guard, which was a precise number. In the evening it would be their responsibility to deliver to the SS³ the same number that had been delivered to them. If one was missing, they themselves would be held accountable and would be taken away to be burned, a life for a life.

Even so, at last after much effort and bargaining between the relatives and the *Kapos*, the *Kapos*' greed conquered them and they agreed—in exchange for large payments—to free this or that boy. But immediately they snatched another boy in his place from those they could capture inside the camp (who had managed to elude yesterday's roundup, or who had been freed during the selection because their heads touched the board). Then they shut up the new captive in the block in place of the ransomed boy in order to meet the quota.

Many people had money or gold pieces or jewels concealed in hiding places or in their shoes for a time of emergency, and of course

¹ According to the testimony of Joseph Kleinman at the Eichmann trial (cited by Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem* (New York, 1966), p. 172), a nearly identical selection ritual was conducted at Auschwitz on Yom Kippur, when two thousand boys were assembled on the SS football grounds and forced to pass under a plank nailed to the goalpost. Since there are many striking similarities between Kleinman's account and that of R. Meisels, it is possible that despite the confusion of dates they are describing the same incident.

² *Kapo* was concentration camp slang for a Jewish prisoner in charge of a section of Jewish inmates. There are different theories of the word's origin, e.g.: an abbreviated form of the French *caporal*; a German slang word for "foreman"; a borrowing from the Italian *capo*, "head"; or an abbreviation of *Kamp Polizei*.

³ One of the subdivisions of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*, defense corps) was the *Totenkopfverband* (death's head units) who were assigned to the concentration camps.

there were some simple people of little understanding who gave no thought to what would be done to replace the ransomed boy. At great sacrifice they collected all the wealth that remained to them, or else managed to gather the required amount from friends or acquaintances, and ransomed their imprisoned child from certain annihilation. This trading continued throughout most of the Day of Judgment [Rosh Hashanah] before the eyes of all the people in the camp. (For it was known that the SS men did not walk around inside the camp during the day, but only around its perimeter. Within the camp itself the Jewish *Kapos* ruled.)

However, there were of course many people of conscience in the camp who would not run to ransom their children at the expense of another boy's life, in accord with the statement of our sages of blessed memory [Pes. 25b], "What [reason] do you see [for thinking your blood is redder? Perhaps his blood is redder]." "Never will I forget one fearful incident that I myself witnessed during the time described above, an incident that symbolizes the holiness of the Jews and their sacrifice for the ways of the holy Torah offered in perfect piety, even in the time of their anguish and fearful suffering.

The Self-Sacrifice of a Father by Not Saving His Only Son

I was approached by a Jewish man who appeared to be a simple Jew from Oberland.⁵ In innocent piety he said to me something like this: "Rabbi! My only son, my dear one so precious to me, is over there among the boys condemned to be burned, and I have the ability to ransom him. Yet we know without a doubt that the *Kapos* will seize another in his place. Therefore I ask of the rabbi a question of law and practice:⁶ According to the Torah, am I permitted to save him? Whatever you decide, I will do."

When I heard this question I was seized by trembling. Could I decide a matter of life and death? I answered him: "My dear friend, how can I render a clear decision for you on a question like this? In such a situation, even when the

Temple stood, a question concerning matters of life and death came before the Sanhedrin.⁷ But I am here in Auschwitz without any books of law, without any other rabbis [to consult or join in a *bet din*], and without a clear mind because of so much suffering and grief."⁸

If it were the way of the wicked *Kapos* to release the ransomed prisoner first and afterward take another in his place, it might be possible to incline a little toward permitting [the ransom], since after all the *Kapos* were Jews, and for them it was certainly forbidden by law to do such a thing with their own hands and endanger another life whose fate had not been to burn. Such an act is included in the prohibition, "One should suffer death rather than transgresses."⁹ If so, it is possible to assume that it was not certain that the *Kapos* would take another life in place of the ransomed one. For perhaps at the last moment their Jewish soul would be stirred and they would not transgress

⁵ Cf. Pes. 25b, Sanh. 74a. The issue is discussed at length in responsum 6.

⁶ Part of Slovakia occupied by Hungary.

⁷ The rabbis differentiate between the purely theoretical study of a legal question and its common application. Only decisions handed down in connection with an actual case constitute practical law. Cf. Bez. 28b, BK 30b; Boaz Cohen, *Law and Tradition in Judaism* (New York, 1969), p. 49.

⁸ The Talmud (Yer. Sanh. 1:1, 7:2; Shab. 15a; Sanh. 41a) records that Jewish courts lost authority over capital cases forty years before the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 C.E.). See Hugo Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, 1965 pp. 291-94, 316). Cf. the possibly contradictory texts cited by Alexander Guttmann, *Rabbinic Judaism in the Making* (Detroit, 1970) pp. 20-21.

⁹ There is Halakic warrant for R. Meisels' reluctance to make a ruling in this instance. While it is a positive commandment for a duly qualified Torah scholar to render Halakic decisions when asked (Lev. 10:11; cf. *Sefer Mizvot ha-Katan* 111), it is forbidden to decide the law while intoxicated or otherwise disoriented (Rashi, Lev. 10:11; Ker. 13b; Ket. 10b; Er. 64a).

⁹ See Sanh. 74a: "R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Shimon b. Yehozedek: They decided by vote in the upper chamber of Bet Niza in Lod: [Concerning] all of the prohibitions of the Torah, if they say to a man, 'Transgress or you will be killed,' he should transgress rather than be killed, with the exception of [the prohibitions of idolatry, unchastity, and murder]."

a severe prohibition like this. See Tosafot to Ket. (72a) s.v. "If . . ." in the name of the Rashba¹⁰ that even if a wife wanted to feed her husband a forbidden thing, she does not leave [the marriage] without her *ketubbah* [the sum guaranteed by her marriage contract], for she could say, "I was only joking, and if you had actually started to eat I would have stopped you." Likewise one could say that as long as the sin was not actually committed, it could be that it would never be committed at all, that the Jewish soul would awaken and a severe prohibition like this would not be violated.

However, to my sorrow I knew with certainty that it was the *Kapos'* practice to first take someone else from the camp and only afterward release the ransomed prisoner. Thus they would be sure that none was lacking from the exact number delivered to them by the SS, for which they were responsible. If they released the ransomed prisoner and did not succeed in taking another in his place, they would pay with their own lives when the SS found that one was missing from the number handed over to them. Obviously there were not [sufficient] grounds to allow anything.¹¹

Still the man mentioned above wept and pleaded with me. He said to me: "Rabbi, you must decide for me now what the law is in this case, for it is very urgent that I save my only son while it is still possible to save him." I begged him, "My dear, precious friend, leave off from asking this question, for I cannot say a thing at all to you without studying a book, [especially] in a situation as fearful and dreadful as this." But he continued to plead with me and said the following: "Rabbi, does this mean that you cannot permit me to ransom my only child? Is it not so? Then I will accept with love the decision."

I entreated him and protested, saying, "Dear Jew, I did not say this either, that I do not permit you to ransom your child. I cannot decide either yes or no. Do as you wish as if you had not asked me at all." But still he stood there and pleaded with me to give him a clear answer. When he saw that I stood firm in my opinion that I did not want to render a legal decision,¹²

he responded with emotion and great fervor: "Rabbi, I did what I could, what the Torah obligated me to do: I asked a question of a rabbi, and there is no other rabbi here. Since you cannot answer me that I am allowed to ransom my child, this is a sign that according to the law you may not permit it. Were it permitted without any hesitation, you surely would have answered me that it is permitted. This means to me that the verdict is that by law I am not allowed to do it. This is enough for me. It is clear that my only child will be burned according to the Torah and the law, and I accept this with love and rejoicing. I will do nothing to ransom him, for so the Torah has commanded."

Nothing I said to him was of any use. I urged him not to lay the responsibility for this upon me, that it was as if I had never heard his question. But he repeated once again with pious fervor and weeping what he had said, which tore the heart into twelve pieces.¹³ So he carried out his words and did not ransom his son. All that day of Rosh Hashanah he walked around talking to himself, murmuring joyfully that he had the merit to sacrifice his only son to God, for even though he could have ransomed him, nevertheless he did not because he saw that the Torah

¹⁰ Referring not to R. Shlomo b. Adret but to R. Shimshon b. Abraham of Sens (late twelfth to early thirteenth century, France).

¹¹ In his own gloss to this account, R. Meisels cites the view of Rema Sh. Ar. (HM 388:2) that one may save himself from impending danger even if his action may endanger others. However, this appears to apply only in the case of potential danger; if one is in immediate peril, he may not save himself at the certain expense of another. The Shakh (HM 163:11) cites the view that if a man is imprisoned and held for ransom, he may not be rescued if another will be sent in his place; but, according to Yad Avraham, YD 157, the prisoner himself may certainly try to escape. In the present case, it might be argued that father and son should be considered the same person; thus permitting the father to bribe the *Kapo*. But R. Meisels finds no definitive warrant for such a view.

¹² Shlomo Rozman, an eyewitness to this encounter, understood R. Meisels to render a definite decision forbidding the father to ransom his son. See Irving Rosenbaum, *The Holocaust and Halakah* (New York, 1976), p. 158.

¹³ Cf. Jud. 19:29.

did not permit him to do so; and that his sacrificial act should be considered by God like the binding of Isaac which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah.¹⁴

And you, my dear brother, look closely and consider the righteousness and perfect piety of this Jewish man. I have no doubt that his words caused a great commotion among the celestial host; and the Holy One, blessed be He, gathered together all the host of heaven and was, so to speak, very proud: "Behold the creatures that I

created in my world." Justifiably it is said of this man [Is. 49:3]: "Thou art My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

ZEVI HIRSCH MEISELS [MEKADDESHEI HA-SHEM 1:7].

¹⁴ One of the explanations given by the Talmud (RH 16a) for the sounding of the ram's horn on Rosh Hashanah is to recall the ram substituted for Isaac. The biblical account of the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22: 1-19) is read on the second day of Rosh Hashanah (Meg. 31a).

A LETTER TO THE WOMAN WHO WILL FIND MY DAUGHTER

Dear Lady:

I leave in your care my child, my treasure! I beg of you, as you are a mother yourself save my *Baby*. God will reward you for the good deed—and I and my family will reward you as well.

Please remember that this child comes from a very rich family, and if and when we survive the war we promise to reward you generously. However, if we don't survive then my little daughter will be able to compensate you for saving her life. (I enclose a document which shows that she will be heir to the estate, property and all the wealth.) My child will bring you luck, and good health!! Please I beseech you dear lady, have pity on my child and save her from annihilation!

She does not need much, just feed her, and keep her clean.

I bathe her every evening, then feed her and she sleeps the night through till six o'clock in the morning.

She is being fed every three hours.

A buttered roll and warm milk with sugar.
Oatmeal with butter and milk.

Once a day carrot juice with sugar.

When she cries please give her a little light tea with sugar.

She also cries when wet.

Dear, Dear, lady we—my husband and I—hope that you will save our precious baby!!!

Please have mercy, take her into your heart like a mother, and give her warmth and love which her own unhappy and tormented mother is not able to give her.

I will try and send you the baby's clothes as soon as possible.

Meanwhile I am sending pillow cases which can be made into little shirts, and sheets into diapers and towels after the bath.

Also for you a few of my good dresses. If the child should—God forbid—get sick, please contact the doctor immediately. When she cries please give her a pacifier dipped in sugar, and lots of talcum powder after the bath.

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

have to hurry. The wedding will probably be celebrated in a close circle, in the home of aunt Haganeska (from *haganah*—defense). We heartily greet you and all our relatives, with special greetings from the newlyweds.

(*Letters from the Ghetto, quoted in Niger, pp. 696-697*)

*Martyrs + Fighters: The Epic of the
Warsaw Ghetto. Philip Friedman ed.,
Raezer. New York, 1954*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The January Revolt and After

On January 18, 1943, the ghetto was surrounded once again and the "second liquidation" began. This time, however, the Germans were not able to carry out their plans unchallenged. Four barricaded battle groups offered the first armed resistance in the ghetto.

The Ż. O. B. was baptized in battle in the first large-scale street fighting at the corner of Miła and Zamenhofa Streets. The best part of the Organization was lost there. Miraculously, because of his heroic attitude, the Ż. O. B. Commander, Mordchaj Anielewicz, survived. After that battle we realized that street fighting would be too costly for us, since we were not sufficiently prepared for it and lacked the proper weapons. We, therefore, switched to partisan fighting. Four major encounters were fought in the apartment houses at 40 Zamenhofa Street, 44 Muranowska Street, 34 Miła Street and 22 Franciszkańska Street. In the Schultz Shop area the S. S. men taking part in the deportation were attacked by the partisans.

... Of all the prepared battle groups only five took part in the January activities. The remainder, not having been assembled at the time of the German's entry into the ghetto, were caught by surprise and were unable to reach the place where their weapons were stored.

... The number of Germans killed by Ż. O. B. bullets was not the only important thing. What was more important was the appearance of a psychological turning point. The mere fact that because of the unexpected resistance, weak as it was, the Germans were forced to interrupt their "deportation"

schedule was of great value. In the meantime, legends about "hundreds" of dead Germans and the "tremendous" power of the Ż. O. B. started circulating throughout Warsaw. The entire Polish Underground was full of praise for us . . . At the end of January we received fifty larger pistols and fifty hand grenades from the Home Army Command. A reorganization of the Ż. O. B. was carried out.

(Edelman, pp. 30-31)

The poet joins the fighters and harangues them.

. . . In the Dror group we were waiting for the enemy. Suddenly the tramp of nailed boots was heard on the staircase. In this grave moment of our determination to raise our hands against the enemy, the poet Yitzhak Katzenelson, who happened to be among us, harangued us with the following encouraging words, which will be engraved on my memory forever: "I am happy to die amidst fighting *Halutzim*. We will take with us into our graves the awareness that the Jewish people will endure eternally."

(Borzykowski, p. 19)

The Significance of the January Uprising (Jan. 18, 1943)

. . . It is very interesting to observe the reaction to this event of the part of the Jewish community and of the best people in the ghetto. After the liberation a soiled, torn notebook was found in the ghetto ruins. On the basis of its contents and the handwriting I was able to establish its author, Samuel Winter from Włocławek, a well-known figure in *Yivo* [Yiddish Scientific Institute] circles. He was a forthright and nationally-minded Jew, well acquainted with Jewish culture and the life of his people. He was very active in the ghetto and one of the most prominent members of the society *Oneg Sabbath*. He was in a bunker during the days of the uprising, from January 17 to January 22, and there he made notes on its repercussions.

On the first day of the uprising, January 17, he notes his

first impressions of the day and adds at the end: "I heard rumors that Jews were fighting on Niska and Zamenhofa Streets—members of *Hashomer* and *Halutzim*. What kind of ideas do they have—these idealists? What will the consequences be? I rather think that from a historical point of view and also with regard to the future the work of the Historical Commission *Oneg Sabbath* is more important than the fighting of the Jews." And later he adds: "Today three thousand Jews were deported from the Warsaw ghetto."

On the following day he notes; "Today several hundred Jews were deported. The Jews are hiding, and the Germans are afraid to enter the cellars and bunkers."

On the fourth day he writes: "On the second day of the uprising the Germans received orders to withdraw from the ghetto and to concentrate on two streets. The Germans withdrew and left the ghetto. I think that the fighting of the young men has forced them to do this" . . .

(I. Cukierman, in *Nasze Stowo*, p. 7)

Himmler orders the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto.
On January 9, 1943 the chief of the German S.S. and Police, Heinrich Himmler, visited the Warsaw ghetto. The result of this visit, and of the unexpected Jewish resistance on January 18-19, 1943 was his Draconian order to wipe out the Warsaw ghetto entirely.

The Reichsfuehrer S. S.
Docket No. 31/33/43 gr.

Fieldkommando, Feb. 16, 1943

SECRET

Personal headquarters of the
Reichsfuehrer SS; Docket
No. Secr/943

The Higher S.S. and Chief of Police East
and S.S. Obergruppenfuehrer Krueger
Cracow

For security reason I hereby order that the Warsaw ghetto be destroyed, after the concentration camp has been transferred elsewhere. All useful parts of the buildings as well as all kinds of materials are to be disposed of.

The razing of the ghetto and the transfer of the concentration camp are necessary because Warsaw will never quiet down and its criminal deeds will never end, as long as the ghetto stands.

A general plan for the destruction of the ghetto must be submitted to me. At least it is necessary that the dwelling space for 500,000 subhumans available until now, which would never be fit for Germans, should completely disappear. In this way, Warsaw, that city of a million people, which has always been a center of decay and mutiny, will be reduced.

/signed/ H. Himmler

2. Copy sent to Chief of Security Police and Security Service with request that notice be taken.

i.a. Br.

SS Obersturmbannfuehrer

(S. Piotrowski, p. 47)

A German masterplan that failed.

Although the Warsaw ghetto, they did not dare to use open action, and tried to lure the Jews into a mouse trap by a ruse. The major German industrialist in the Warsaw ghetto, Walter Caesar Toejbens, had been chosen as a tool. A dramatic public battle of proclamations between Toejbens and the JFO followed. Finally, the German master-plan proved to be a complete failure.

The Germans probably understood the new frame of mind in the ghetto and knew that the people were arming. That

may be why they decided to carry out the last step in the liquidation of the ghetto quietly, slowly, without terror, without the bestial scenes of the selections and the seizures. They proposed an evacuation plan.

The forty thousand Jews who remained were almost all workers registered in the factories producing for the military battlefront. As evacuation commissioner the Germans picked Toejbens, one of the most important factory owners. He was given the task of moving all the workshops, including their human and material inventories, to Travniki and Poniatov, both well-known places near Lublin.

Toejbens had a large propaganda staff, members of which appeared before the assembled workers in each factory and described all the blessings of working peacefully in the lap of nature in the countryside, with fresh air and good food, so different from the Warsaw ghetto, poisoned with epidemics, filth, and sickness. Toejbens himself attended such meetings and gave his word of honor that the factory workers and their families were being moved only to continue work. He begged them not to credit the "malicious" rumors which were spread in the ghetto that deported Jews were killed.

The Fighting Coordinating Committee and the Jewish Fighting Organization posted a proclamation stating that Travniki and Poniatov meant a new deportation, a new form of extermination and death . . .

(Goldstein, pp. 184-185)

On March 14, the Jewish Fighting Organization posted appeals, calling on all Jews to ignore the German orders and stressing that voluntary "resettlement" would bring nothing but the inevitable doom of the ghetto. On March 20, Toejbens posted his appeals alongside ours. The Jewish Fighting Organization, after having learned of their printing, confiscated part of them.

(Cukierman, in *Przelom*, p. 15)

The Appeal by Toejbens.

To the Jewish War-Workers of the Jewish Quarters! I wish to reply to the call issued by the Jewish Fighting Organization on the night of March 14-15. I want to state categorically that: 1) The deportation campaign will definitely not take place; 2) Neither I nor Herr Shultz, have been ordered at the point of a gun to conduct such a campaign; 3) I give assurance that the last transport of deportees has not gone astray. It is a shame that the war-workers of Toejbens plant did not take my advice. I regret, too, that I had to move one of my factories in order to take advantage of existing transportation opportunities. Furthermore an order was given that the names of the workers who had already arrived in Trawniki be immediately ascertained, and that their baggage be delivered to them there. The statement that the guard which accompanied the second transport of workers from Prosta Street to Poniatów does not know the fate of these workers is a criminal provocation and a base lie designed to influence the war-workers.

The escorts dispatched the trucks but did not accompany them. They only returned in freight trucks together with some workers from Poniatów in order to fetch the workers' belongings. The baggage was not taken away from Prosta Street, but remained there in the charge of a Jew Lifszyc, who is an engineer, and from whom information regarding the whereabouts of the baggage can be obtained at any time. Every worker in Trawniki and Poniatów has now received his complete baggage.

Jewish war-workers! Do not believe those who want to mislead you. They only wish to provoke you in order to bring about results that will be disastrous to you. Life in the underground fortifications is very uncertain, as uncertain as the life of a Jew in the "Aryan" quarters of the city. This insecurity only breaks the morale of the war-workers who are accustomed to work. Let me ask you, why do rich Jews who live in the "Aryan" quarters, come to me for jobs? They cer-

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

tainly have enough money to live on, but what they can't stand is inactivity.

It is with the fullest conviction that I urge you to do the following: Go to Trawniki, to Poniatów, because there you will have an opportunity to live and be able to witness the end of the war. The leaders of the Jewish Fighting Organization cannot help you. They feed you with false promises. They sell you places in their secret underground fortifications for large sums of money. Later they will again drive you out into the streets and abandon you once more to your fate. Certainly you have experienced enough of their deceptions and tricks. Trust only the German managers of the factories, who will, with your help, produce war material in Poniatów and Trawniki. Take your women and children with you, because their welfare concerns us too.

Walter C. Toejbens

Director of Transportation of Factories
from the Jewish Quarter of Warsaw.

(*News Bulletin of Polish Jewry, No. 1-2 (1945)*)

Lichtenbaum's answer: "I have no power in the ghetto; another government rules here."

Jews went into hiding. Apparently German designs either did not yet foresee the ultimate liquidation of the ghetto or held it premature for the time being. Therefore, they addressed themselves to the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), asking it to carry out the action. The *Judenrat*, on the motion of Dr. Itzhak Schiper, invited the Jewish Fighting Organization to a conference. This invitation was, of course, rejected with indignation, whereupon the notorious chairman of the *Judenrat*, Marc Lichtenbaum, gave the Germans the following characteristic reply: "I have no power in the ghetto; another government rules here!" The German plans ended in complete failure . . .

(*Gukierman, in Przelom, p. 15*)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The April Revolt

The first encounter

The report of a fighter.

... Finally, the Germans decided to liquidate the Warsaw ghetto completely, regardless of cost. On April 19, 1943, at two a. m., the first messages concerning the Germans' approach arrived from our outermost observation posts. These reports made it clear that German gendarmes, aided by Polish "navy blue"¹ policemen, were encircling the outer ghetto walls at 30-yard intervals. An emergency alarm to all our battle groups was immediately ordered, and at 2:15, i.e. fifteen minutes later, all the groups were already at their battle stations. We also informed the entire population of the imminent danger, and most of the ghetto inhabitants moved instantly to previously prepared shelters and hideouts in the cellars and attics of buildings. A deathly silence enveloped the ghetto. The *Ż. O. B.* was on the alert.

At four a. m. the Germans, in groups of threes, fours, or fives, so as not to arouse the *Ż. O. B.*'s or the population's suspicion, began penetrating into the "inter-ghetto" areas. Here they formed into platoons and companies. At seven o'clock motorized detachments, including a number of tanks and armored vehicles, entered the ghetto. Artillery pieces were placed outside the walls. Now the SS were ready to attack. In closed formations, stepping haughtily and loudly, they marched into the seemingly dead streets of the central

¹ In navy-blue uniforms.

ghetto . . . But no, they did not scare us and we were not taken by surprise. We were only awaiting an opportune moment. Such a moment presently arrived. The Germans chose the intersection at Mifa and Zamenhofa Streets for their bivouac area, and battle groups barricaded at the four corners of the street opened concentric fire on them. Strange projectiles began exploding everywhere (the hand grenades of our own make), the lone machine pistol sent shots through the air now and then (ammunition had to be conserved carefully), rifles started firing a bit further away. Such was the beginning.

The Germans attempted a retreat, but their path was cut. German dead soon littered the street. The remainder tried to find cover in the neighboring stores and house entrances, but this shelter proved insufficient. The "glorious" SS therefore called tanks into action under the cover of which the remaining men of two companies were to commence a "victorious" retreat. But even the tanks seemed to be affected by the German's bad luck. The first was burned out by one of our incendiary bottles, the rest did not approach our position. The fate of the Germans caught in the Mifa Street—Zamenhofa Street trap was settled. Not a single German left this area alive . . .

(*Edelman*, pp. 34-35)

Another fighter's report.

Simkhah Rathayzer (pseudonym "*Kazik*") was eighteen years old at the time of the uprising. He was a member of the Zionist youth organization Hanoar Hazioni and later of Akiba. Since 1946 he has lived in Israel. The report quoted below was dispatched abroad from Warsaw on May 24, 1944.

Tuesday, April 20, the first day of Passover (1943)

At three o'clock in the afternoon I was standing on guard at the scouting post where there was a fuse to switch on the

mine. Then, from the direction of Franciszkańska Street a detachment of about three hundred Germans turns into Wałowa Street in our area. With one hand I grabbed the fuse, while with the other one I pressed down the alarm clock. The commander is hurrying toward me. The Germans are coming nearer, now they are already at the gate. Suddenly a terrific detonation is heard. I see bodies flying into the air, hands and feet separately. Eighty to a hundred dead can be counted. The rest are withdrawing in great disorder. We meanwhile are occupying our positions and waiting. One hour passes, then another. The Germans are assembling again, they are deliberating, a few higher officers have arrived. All of a sudden we hear voices at our walls. The Germans are pouring into the court-yard, they are marching in goose-step. Their faces are frightened, and they clutch their rifles, ready to fire. Actually they don't walk, they rather run, remaining close to the walls of the buildings all the time. My comrade and I let the first six pass. It is not worthwhile to waste a hand-grenade on such a small group. Behind them a whole band is coming. We have two hand-grenades of our own make, two incendiary bottles and small arms. "Shlamek (Shlama Schuster), fire," I call to my comrade and hurl my hand-grenade into the middle of the bunch. There is an explosion . . . a few dead. We toss the incendiary bottles, and a few Germans are caught by flames. They are sending up a hell of bullets. Since we possess only one more hand-grenade, which we want to keep for later, we withdraw. We climb higher and take up our positions at the side of our other comrades. Suddenly all becomes quiet. The Germans have fled. After half an hour they appear again, and again this time we greet them with hand-grenades and incendiary bottles. They shoot rapidly and then they withdraw again, leaving behind their dead and wounded. One of the Germans has caught a glimpse of a girl on our position. "Hans, look," he shouts to his comrades, "a woman!" and they all start shooting at her. But the girl does not withdraw, and she gives

them the welcome they deserve. One of our fighters, who holds a position in the attic, is shooting at the German guards on the walls. Despite their heavy fire, he managed to kill six of them. In the court-yard of the block Świętojerska 32—Wałowa 6 appears one of the directors of the brush firm, Dr. Laus, in the company of two Germans in uniforms. With their rifles they make signs of their peaceful intentions. Dr. Laus summons the Fighting Organization to lay down their arms within fifteen minutes. We counter with shooting. One of the Germans is killed, and Dr. Laus flees. Now the real siege starts . . .

(*Neustadt*, pp. 273-275)

An Official German Report

In a report to his superior, the German Commander, General Juergen Stroop gives an overall survey of his operations in the Warsaw ghetto since April 19.

When the Reichsfuehrer SS¹ visited Warsaw in January 1943 he ordered the SS and Police Leader for the District of Warsaw to transfer to Lublin the armament factories and other enterprises of military importance which were installed within the ghetto including their personnel and machines . . .

I myself arrived in Warsaw on April 17, 1943 and took over the command of the action on April 19, 1943, 0800 hours, the action itself having started the same day at 0600 hours . . .

When we invaded the ghetto for the first time, the Jews and the Polish bandits succeeded in repelling the participating units, including tanks and armored cars, by a well-prepared concentration of fire . . .

The main Jewish battle group, mixed with Polish bandits, had already retired during the first and second day to the so-called Muranowski Square. There, it was reinforced by a considerable number of Polish bandits.² Its plan was to hold the

¹ Heinrich Himmler.

² The Germans could not admit that they had been beaten by Jews, and

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

ghetto by every means in order to prevent us from invading it. The Jewish and Polish standards were hoisted at the top of a concrete building as a challenge to us . . .

Moreover, the Jews had succeeded in fortifying some of the factories as centers of resistance. Such a center of resistance in an Army accommodation office was to be attacked as early as the second day of the action by an Engineer's Unit equipped with flame throwers and by artillery. The Jews were so firmly established in this shop that it proved to be impossible to induce them to leave it voluntarily; I therefore resolved to destroy this shop the next day by fire . . .

. . . The number of Jews forcibly taken out of the buildings and arrested was relatively small during the first few days. It transpired that the Jews had taken to hiding in the sewers and in specially erected dug-outs. Whereas we had assumed during the first days that there were only scattered dug-outs, we learned in the course of the large-scale action that the whole ghetto was systematically equipped with cellars, dug-outs, and passages. In every case these passages and dug-outs were connected with the sewer system. Thus, the Jews were able to maintain an undisturbed subterranean traffic. They also used this sewer network for escaping subterraneously into the Aryan part of the city of Warsaw. Continuously, we received reports of attempts of Jews to escape through the sewer holes. While pretending to build air-raid shelters they had been erecting dug-outs within the former ghetto ever since the autumn of 1942 . . .

Whereas it had been possible during the first days to catch considerable numbers of Jews, who are cowards by nature, it became more and more difficult during the second half of the action to capture the bandits and Jews. Over and over again new battle groups consisting of twenty to thirty or more Jewish fellows, eighteen to twenty-five years of age, accompanied

tried to create the impression that considerable Polish underground forces were involved in the fighting, which was not true. Ed.



"Hans, look . . . a woman!"

by a corresponding number of women kindled new resistance. These battle groups were under orders to put up armed resistance to the last and if necessary to escape arrest by committing suicide . . .

(*Stroop, Report, in Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. III pp. 723-724*)

Besides a general survey of the military operations, Stroop's report contains a summary of the armed forces used in the battle and of their (probably minimized) losses, and a collection of teletype messages sent day-by-day to his superior, the SS and Police Chief for the General Government, General Krueger. The report begins with the following statement:

The Warsaw Ghetto is no more!

For the Fuehrer and their country the following fell on the battle for the destruction of Jews and bandits in the former ghetto of Warsaw:

(follow 15 names)

Furthermore, the Polish Police Sergeant Julian Zieliński, born November 13, 1891, 8th Commissariat . . . fell on April 19, 1943 while fulfilling his duty . . . They gave their utmost, their lives. We shall never forget them. The following were wounded:

[follow the names of—

- 60 Waffen SS personnel
- 11 "Watchmen" from Training Camps, probably Lithuanians, to judge by their names.
- 12 Security Police Officers in SS Units.
- 5 men of the Polish Police
- 2 regular Army personnel engineers]

Average number of personnel used per day, officers/men

Units used in the action
SS Staff & Police Leader 6/5
Waffen SS:

SS Panzer Grenadier Training and Reserve Battalion 3, Warsaw 4/440
SS Cav. Training and Res Bat. Warsaw 5/381

Police:

SS Police Regiment 22, I. Bat. 3/94
III. Bat. 3/134

Engineering Emergency Service 1/6
Polish Police 4/363

Polish Fire Brigade 166
Security Police:

Wehrmacht

Light AA Alarm Battery III/8 Warsaw 2/22

Engineers Dt. of Railway Armored Trains

Res. Bat. Rembertów 2/42

Res. Eng. 14 Góra-Kalwaria 1/34

Foreign Racial Watchmen:

1 Bat. "Trawniki" men¹ 2/335

Total: 36/2054

(Translator's note: This obviously means: 36 officers, 2054 men)

(*Stroop: Report, in Nazi Conspiracy, Vol. III, pp. 718-719*)

By fire and flames

The resistance of the Jews was so strong that it could be broken only by "relentlessly using all our forces and energy by night and day." The Germans eventually resorted to fire, smoke candles and explosives, blowing up entire buildings.

A few selections from Stroop's report will illustrate these methods:

¹ Probably Ukrainian auxiliary guards from the concentration camp Trawniki.

The resistance put up by the Jews and bandits could be broken only by relentlessly using all our forces and energy by day and night. On April 23, 1943 the Reichs Fuehrer SS issued through the Higher SS and Police Fuehrer East at Cracow his order to complete the combing out of the Warsaw ghetto with the greatest severity and relentless tenacity. I therefore decided to destroy the entire Jewish residential area by setting every block afire, including the blocks of residential buildings near the armament works. One concern after the other was systematically evacuated and subsequently destroyed by fire. The Jews then emerged from their hiding places and dug-outs in almost every case. Not infrequently, the Jews stayed in the burning buildings until, because of the heat and the fear of being burned alive they preferred to jump down from the upper stories, after having thrown mattresses and other upholstered articles into the street from the burning buildings. With their bones broken, they still tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which had not yet been set on fire or were only partly in flames. Often the Jews changed their hiding places during the night, by moving into ruins of burnt-out buildings, taking refuge there until they were found by our patrols. Their stay in the sewers also ceased to be pleasant after the first week. Frequently from the street, we could hear loud voices coming through the sewer shafts. Then the men of the Waffen SS, the Police or the Wehrmacht Engineers courageously climbed down the shafts to bring out the Jews and not infrequently they then stumbled over Jews already dead, or were shot at. It was always necessary to use smoke candles to drive out the Jews. Thus one day we opened 183 sewer entrance holes and at a fixed time lowered smoke candles into them, with the result that the bandits fled, from what they believed to be gas to the center of the former ghetto where they could then be pulled out of the sewer holes there. A great number of Jews, who could not be counted, were exterminated by blowing up sewers and dug-outs.

[From the teletype message of April 22, 1943]:

Not until the blocks of buildings were well aflame and were about to collapse did a further considerable number of Jews emerge, forced to do so by the flames and the smoke. Time and again the Jews try to escape even through burning buildings. Innumerable Jews whom we saw on the roofs during the conflagration perished in the flames. Others emerged from the upper stories in the last possible moment and were only able to escape death in the flames by jumping down . . . (*ibidem*, p. 755)

[From the teletype message of May 7, 1943]:

The Jews testify that they emerge at night to get fresh air, since it is unbearable to stay permanently in the dug-outs owing to the long duration of the operation. On the average the raiding parties shoot thirty to fifty Jews each night. From these statements it was to be inferred that a considerable number of Jews are still underground in the ghetto. Today we blew up a concrete building which we had not been able to destroy by fire. In this operation we learned that the blowing up of a building is a very lengthy process and takes an enormous amount of explosives. The best and only method for destroying the Jews therefore still remains the setting of fires. (*ibidem*, p. 759)

"For days and nights the ghetto flamed . . . and there was no one to halt the blaze."

The ghetto was burning. For days and nights it flamed, and the fire consumed house after house, entire streets. Columns of smoke rose, sparks flew, and the sky reflected a red, frightening glow. Nearby, on the other side of the wall, citizens of the capital strolled, played, and enjoyed themselves. They knew that "the Jews were burning." The wind blew smoke and soot from the burning ruins in their direction. Sparks scattered and now and then a house outside the ghetto would catch fire. But these fires were immediately

extinguished. Only in the ghetto no one hastened to put out the flames, to come to the rescue. Everything was burning and there was no one to halt the blaze.

... On the night the great fire started, I ran from my hiding place. The blazing light stunned me. All round I heard the roar of the fire, the noise of falling walls. Outside the ghetto it was spring, but here a holocaust reigned. The smoke forced us above ground. We threaded our way through the ruins, circling the flames, traveling from attic to attic through the breaks in the walls, and, when they had burned to the ground, from one basement to another. The Germans were firing at anything that moved... Wreckage, skeletons of burned buildings, ruins. Occasionally a smoldering house flared up in flames. It was strange; each time we came above ground it was more difficult to recognize the ghetto, things changed so rapidly...

(Lubetkin, Commentary, pp. 401-402)

The partisans' stand was so determined that the Germans were finally forced to abandon all ordinary fighting methods and to try new, apparently infallible tactics. Their new idea was set fire to the entire brushmakers' block from the outside, on all sides simultaneously. In an instant fires were raging over the entire block, black smoke choked one's throat, burned one's eyes. The partisans, naturally, did not intend to be burnt alive in the flames. We decided to gamble for our lives and to attempt to reach the central ghetto area regardless of consequences.

... The omnipotent flames were now able to accomplish what the Germans could not do. Thousands of people perished in the conflagration. The stench of burning bodies was everywhere. Charred corpses lay around on balconies, in window recesses, on unburned steps. The flames chased the people out from their shelters, made them leave the previously prepared safe hideouts in attics and cellars. Thousands staggered about in the courtyards where they were



Smoke over the Ghetto

easy prey for the Germans who imprisoned them or killed them outright. Tired beyond all endurance, they would fall asleep in driveways, entrances, standing, sitting, lying and were caught asleep by a passing German's bullet . . .
(*Edelman*, pp. 37-38)

The reports of the JFO.

The Jewish fighters of the ghetto issued communiques and bulletins every day during the first ten days of the battle. The first three communiques (April 19 and 20) were prepared by the Jewish National Committee, afterwards the communiques were edited by the coordinating committee of the Jewish National Committee and the Bund. On the part of the Jewish National Committee the editors were: Adam Borowski (Adolf Berman) and Antek (Izchak Cukierman), on the part of the Bund: Mikolaj Berezowski (Leon Feiner). The communiques were based on the reports of liason agents and special observers, Poles and Jews, as well as the information given by the Polish underground, and telephone calls from the ghetto. At that time, the three editors of the bulletins stayed in the "Aryan" part of the city. The communiques and bulletins were also broadcast abroad by the clandestine Polish radio stations. Here are a few selections from these reports.

Texts of the Bulletins of the Jewish National Committee (Z. K. N.)

Bulletin No. 1 April 19, 1943

Today, on Monday, April 19, the Germans started a new, deadly action in the Warsaw ghetto. By four o'clock in the morning, intensive rifle and machine gun fire, as well as the bursting of shells were heard in the vicinity of the ghetto walls. Armored cars and tanks moved into the ghetto. The action is being carried out by German military police under the command of the SS. The Polish police have been withdrawn from the ghetto. They are now assigned to watch

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

the ghetto walls from outside. The ghetto itself has taken on the appearance of a besieged fortress. Around the walls of the ghetto are posted military police in full battle dress, very close to each other, their rifles aimed point-blank at the walls; also Polish police.

The action is planned against the so-called central ghetto. The Jewish Fighting Organization, which encompasses all active elements of the Jewish community, is putting up strong resistance in many buildings. Violent battles are going on between the Jewish fighters and the Germans.

At noon a number of German Red Cross ambulances left the ghetto with killed and wounded German military police and SS men. The resistance of the Jews is growing steadily and is much stronger than it was in January of this year. In several buildings fire broke out as a result of the shooting from both sides. Pillars of smoke are hovering over the ghetto.

The ultimate goal of the German action is the extermination and complete liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, the main center of the resistance of the fighting Jewish community.

At this hour, while we are sending this bulletin, the fighting is going on with unabated fury.

Bulletin No. 3 Tuesday, April 20, 1943

The Jewish Fighting Organization, which leads the fight in the Warsaw ghetto has rejected an ultimatum of the Germans demanding the laying down of arms by ten o'clock Tuesday morning.

After several hours of comparative calm, the battle was resumed. The Germans brought strong military detachments, field artillery, tanks and armored columns into the battle. On Tuesday the gunfire lasted uninterrupted throughout the afternoon and the evening. The streets adjacent to the ghetto, in particular the section of Bonifraterska, Franciszkańska and Świętojerska streets were occupied by German military forces

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

and SS-men. In the squares the Germans set up field guns and on the roofs heavy machine guns. About five or six o'clock in the afternoon a violent barrage fire started from that direction. The bursting of shells was heard even at a distance of dozens of miles. Many fires are breaking out, and nobody cares to extinguish them. Over the ghetto pillars of smoke are soaring high . . .

. . . The Jewish fighters have two flags on the roof of a building in the Muranowska street: one red and white, the other blue and white.¹ On one of the other buildings a flag with a battle slogan appeared. At the outlet of the Sapieżynska Street the Jewish fighters climbed up the ghetto wall and from there threw a few hand-grenades. Several SS-men, military policemen and "blue" policemen were torn to pieces.

On Tuesday afternoon the Germans tightened the siege of the ghetto. They cut off the light, water and gas from all the ghetto streets. In order to smoke out the shelters and other hiding places in the ghetto (the so-called "Jewish bunkers"), the Germans introduced packs of police hounds. The results of the first day (Monday) of action of the Jewish fighters are already known: more than a hundred Germans have been killed or wounded. Some dozens of Germans were stripped of their arms. A few tanks were burned with benzine bottles.

The Bulletins of the Coordinating Committee of the ŻKN and the Bund.

Bulletin No. 5 Thursday, April 22, 1943

Thursday was marked by great conflagrations which swept through Świętojska, Franciszkańska, Wałowa and Nalewki streets and in the afternoon also reached Zamenhofa Street. The fires were caused by both the explosive and the incendiary shells of the German artillery. During the whole day the ghetto was enveloped in dense smoke which grew thicker

¹ The Polish and the Jewish national flags.

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

every hour. The fires in the buildings near the ghetto walls on Franciszkańska and Świętojska streets were raging with unheard of violence. The streets of the ghetto were saturated with thick, biting smoke. It is obvious that the Germans have initiated the vicious tactic of burning down the ghetto. Being now convinced that they cannot break the resistance of the Jewish fighters in open battle, they are now trying to annihilate them by fire. In the buildings thousands of women and children are burning to death. Terrible screams and desperate calls for help are coming from the buildings. In the windows many persons appear wrapped in flames, like living torches. All these fires, however, have not shattered the determination of the Jewish fighters, who continue to put up heroic resistance against the Germans. The Germans are out to make it impossible for the Jews to escape or to contact the fighters through the sewers. They ordered the municipal authorities to bung the outlets of the sewers. Some of the sewers are raked by the Germans with fire from time to time. According to preliminary accounts, the losses of the Germans during the first three days of the battle amount to two hundred killed and four hundred wounded.

Report on the situation on April 25, 1943

This afternoon incendiary bombs were again dropped from airplanes. A dozen or more fires were counted. In the evening a red glare from the ever-spreading fires brightened the skies over the ghetto. . . .

Bulletin No. 6 Tuesday, April 27, 1943

. . . Despite the deportation of a considerable number of people from the "shop" center (it has been learned that two thousand persons were deported from the premises of Toebbens, among others), and despite the killing of several thousand Jews in the central ghetto during the action, the greater part of the population (50,000 people) are still in the ghetto, in shelters and hiding-places. They are all threat-

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

ened with being burned alive or killed by the Germans in the future.

All these persons who have preferred to stay in the ghetto will not give up voluntarily. They will fight to the last, under the command of the Jewish Fighting Organization.

Report on the situation on April 28, 1943

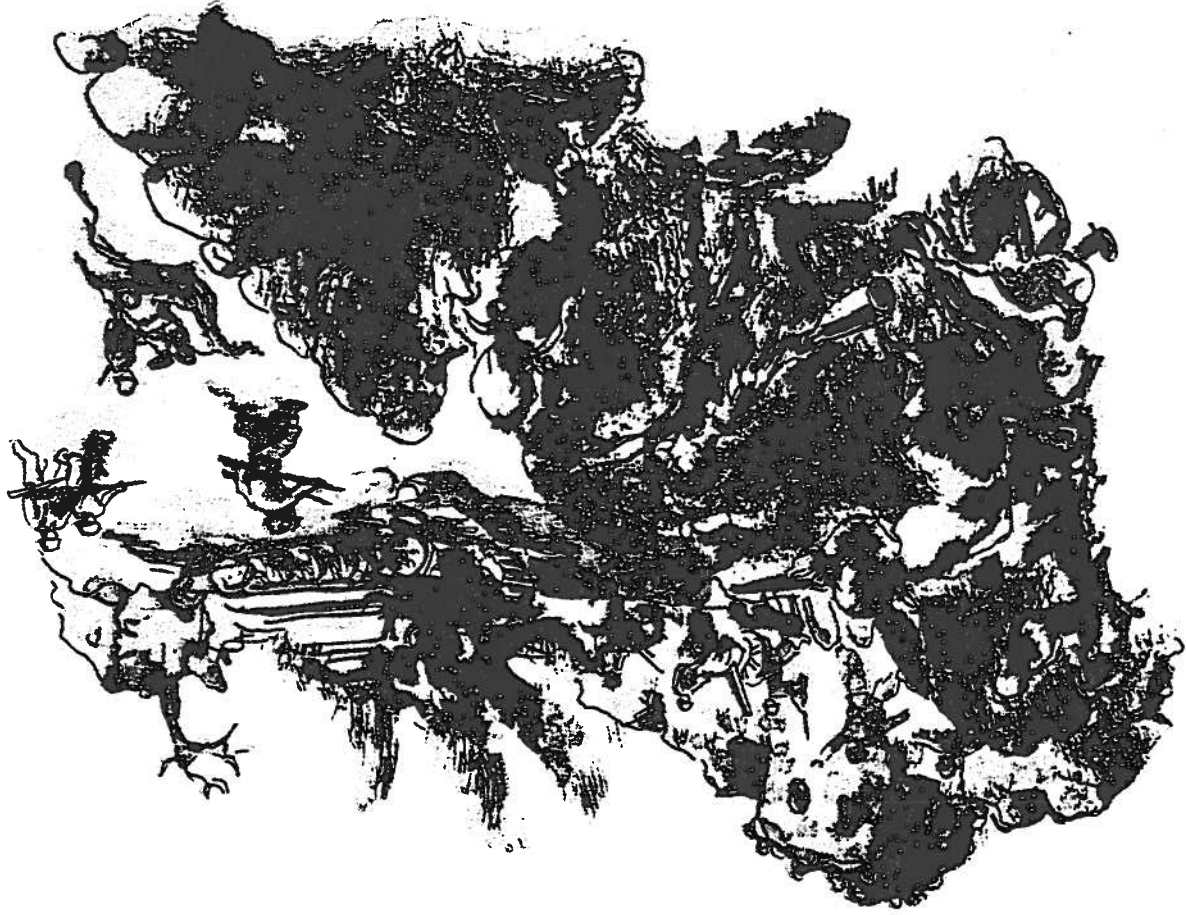
Since a few days ago the fight has totally changed its aspect and has now been confined to a number of sporadic partisan actions. The various centers of resistance fight quite independently from each other; the Germans are now leading their attacks in concentric circles and in wedges. Sometimes, even on the same street, the various resistance groups are isolated from each other . . .

Two factors, quite apart, of course, from the fire power of the enemy, contribute to a great extent to the dismemberment and shattering of the resistance of the fighting ghetto. In the first place, the rapid dwindling of the very limited ammunition supplies makes itself felt . . .

The second factor is the fires, which cause confusion and disrupt the continuity of the ghetto resistance. In the last few days the enemy has started systematically to set afire whole blocks, thus barring with burning buildings the access to those blocks from which the most intensive resistance action was to be expected.

Bulletin No. 7 of the Coordinating Committee. Thursday, April 29, 1943

On the basis of the testimony of eye-witnesses, we are able to announce that on Friday, April 23, all the presiding officers of the Jewish Community Council who were arrested at the start of the liquidation action (on April 19) and were kept as hostages in the *Befehlsstelle* (Command quarters) at 103 Zelazna Street, were transferred to the *Unschlagplatz* (transfer place). After being herded into the courtyard of the *Unschlagplatz*, near the main office, they were later shot—



after a short scuffle—by the SS-men. Their bodies were thrown into the garbage pit. In this way perished: the chairman of the Community Council, ingenieur Marek Lichtenbaum, the vice-chairman, Dr. Gustav Wielikowski and ingenieur Alfred Sztolcman, as well as a counselor, ingenieur Stanislaw Szereszewski.
(*JFO bulletins*)

The reports of the Revisionist Fighting Organization.

... In the ghetto our organization, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, occupied the houses on Muranowska Street and Place Muranowski. Over the house of the headquarters, at 7-9, Muranowska Street, was raised the blue and white flag ...

The first clash occurred when the Germans entered the ghetto through Nalewki Street. From the Place Muranowski machine-gun fire was opened on them, while through the windows hand grenades were thrown, and firing started from rifles and revolvers. In the afternoon the Germans withdrew from the ghetto. The same day they attacked the Brush Shop in Świętojska and Wałowa Streets. They were received by a hail of hand-grenade and rifle salvos. Then they came with tanks. The tanks were showered with Molotov cocktail incendiaries. One tank burst into flames ...

On the second day, Tuesday, April 20, the Germans again attempted to penetrate the Brush Shop. As they entered the door there was a tremendous explosion. The door had been mined. Every German there was blown to bits or seriously injured.

Meanwhile in the ghetto itself the fight was continuing. We fought at every house, at every bunker. Contact with the other Commands was impossible. Only at night did we succeed in making contact with the Toebbens-Schulz section ...

On the eleventh day, April 29, the "ghetto" section decided to withdraw through our tunnel into the Michalin Forest, near Warsaw, to pursue the fight against the enemy. One part

remained as a cover in the ghetto and there continued to fight ...

That night the first group reached the forest but was discovered by the Germans and surrounded. Heavy fighting developed. After several hours of fighting the group succeeded in breaking through the German ring and reached a previously prepared bunker at 13 Grzybowska Street on the "Aryan" side.

To them, on May 2, through sewers and secret paths, came the "Toebbens-Schulz" section, and the two groups were fused. At a staff meeting it was decided to send two people into the ghetto in order to bring out, through our tunnel, groups of Jews. This mission was entrusted to Lejb (Leon) Rodal. The first group was brought out on May 5. While the second group was being brought out on Friday, May 6, a clash developed with the Germans and the Polish police. Leon Rodal was killed, with the greater part of the group.

The situation generally grew continually worse. Our resistance, though weaker, continued.

After long and hard efforts the section on Grzybowska Street succeeded in establishing contact with the Polish Underground movement. They undertook to bring the group to the Lublin Forests and there to link up with the partisans. The date of the operation was fixed for Wednesday, May 12. We do not know to this day whether they were betrayed or not, but on the eleventh the house was surrounded by Gestapo and German soldiers. The whole section was in the bunker. The Germans demanded their surrender. They replied with their rifles. The battle lasted a whole day. Finally the Germans showered the bunker with bombs. Among those who fell there were the commander, Paul Frenkel, and his best and most loyal comrades.

(*Wdowiński*, pp. 18-24)

Episodes and snapshots from the battle.

... At the same time heavy fighting raged at Muranowski-

square. Here the Germans attacked from all directions. The cornered partisans defended themselves bitterly and succeeded, by truly superhuman efforts, in repulsing the attacks. Two German machine guns as well as a quantity of other weapons were captured. A German tank was burned, the second tank of the day.

... On the fourth story, at a small window, our old soldier Diamant is at his combat post. His is a long rifle whose glorious history reaches back to the Russo-Japanese War. Diamant is phlegmatic, his movements are slow but deliberate. The young boys near him impatiently try to hurry him along. But Diamant is imperturbable. He aims at the stomach, hits the heart. Every round finishes off another German.

At 56 Leszno Street Jurek is cornered at an outpost. A group of SS men surrounds him, and one throws a grenade. Jurek adroitly catches the grenade in mid-air and tosses it back at the SS men before it has time to explode. Four of them are killed on the spot . . .

(*Edelman*, pp. 36-39)

Women fighting like men.

During the armed resistance the women belonging to the battle groups were equipped the same as the men; some were members of the *Halutzim* movement. Not infrequently, these women fired pistols with both hands. It happened time and again that these women had pistols or hand grenades (Polish "pineapple," hand grenades) concealed in their bloomers up to the last moment to use against the men of the Waffen SS, Police or Wehrmacht . . .

(*Stroop, Report*, p. 725)

The First Seder in the thunderstorm of the battle.

On the evening of April 19, I entered the house No. 4

Kurza Street in order to get some flashlight batteries for our fighting group. Passing through a number of apartments I suddenly found myself in the apartment of Rabbi Mayzel.¹ As soon as I stepped over the threshold I realized that it was Passover, the night of the First Seder.

The room looked as if it had been struck by a pogrom. The bedding was jumbled together, the chairs were upset and the floor was strewn with various objects. The window glass had been broken by the detonations. All this had happened during the day, before the inhabitants of the apartment came back from the bunkers.

Only the table in the middle of the room had a festive appearance and contrasted strikingly with the rest of the furniture and other objects in the room.

The wine in the goblets on the table was red as the blood of the Jews who perished on that same day, the eve of Passover. The Haggadah was read by the Rabbi to the accompaniment of the incessant shooting and bursting of shells which were heard in the ghetto throughout the whole night.

The flames of the burning houses around threw an ever brighter light through the windows, and by this flickering light you could see the faces of the people sitting in the dark room around the Seder table.

When the Rabbi came to the portion of the Haggadah "Pour on Your Wrath," he and all his companions broke out in loud weeping. I felt it was the weeping of people condemned to death, who already were intimate with the thought of death, but still were afraid of it at the hour of its arrival. The words of the Rabbi were filled with sorrow for those Jews who had not lived to see the First Seder night, but his tone, at the same time, betrayed the unspoken prayer for survival until the Second Seder night.

Together with the rise and fall of the shooting and the fires around, the spirits grew weaker or stronger. In the

¹ In all probability Rabbi Eliezer Itzhak Mayzel of Lodz.

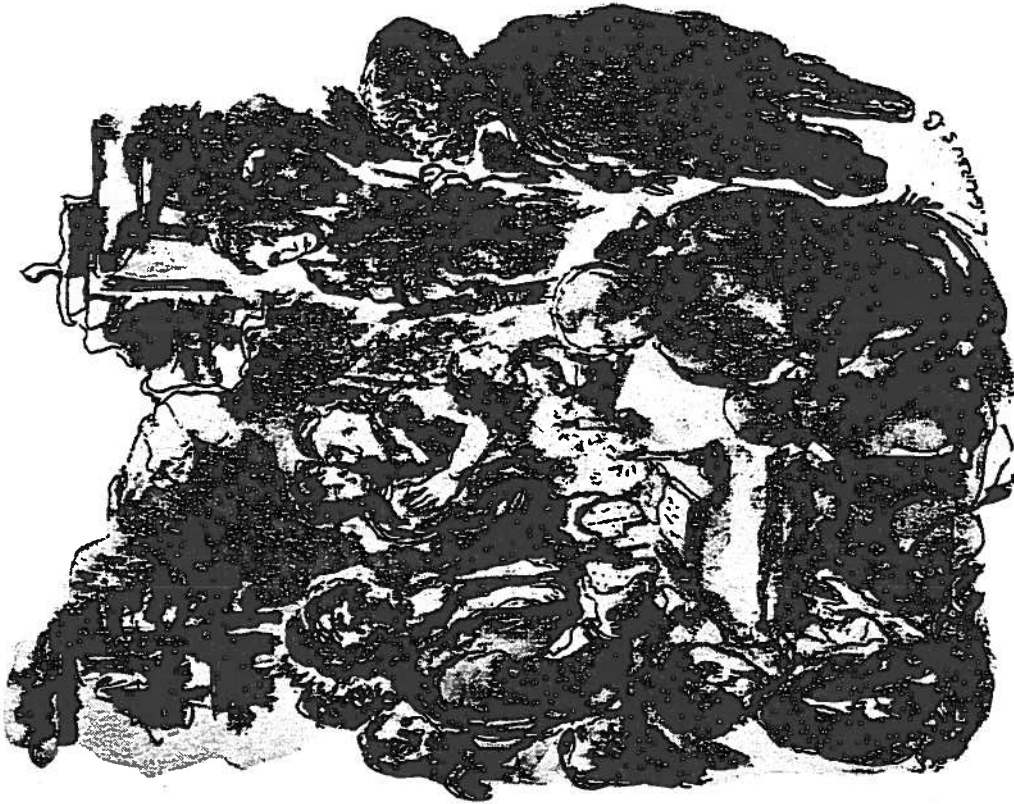
minutes of growing hopefulness the words of the Rabbi expressed the belief that a miracle may yet happen, as once in Egypt. But then the next minutes brought forth a wave of despair and the awareness that we are a deserted generation which is doomed to perish down to the last man.

The deeper the Rabbi plunged into the Haggadah, the more oppressive became his mood. In his thoughts the former liberation was contrasted against the hopelessness of present times, and he could not forget the situation with no way out. He was already tired from sitting in bunkers the whole day, numb from the incessant shooting in the streets, stirred and confused by every bit of news about the situation in the ghetto, and now he was sitting at the Seder like a stranger. His inner feelings were adverse to any festive mood. He put aside the Haggadah and in utter depression, dropped his head heavily over the table, raising it from time to time when he wanted to talk to me. He wished to hear from me a few comforting words, he wanted to know about the battles that were going on on the first day of the uprising and also about our plans for the future.

I was overcome by a strange feeling, while sitting in the Rabbi's room. I could not shake off the gloomy atmosphere which was so oppressive. I saw in the person of the Rabbi the tragedy of the older generation which could not muster the force to go down fighting and this was the source of its present helplessness and despondency.

When I was about to leave the apartment, the Rabbi bade me a hearty farewell and wished us success in our fighting. "I myself," he said, "am too old and weak. But you are young people. Fight successfully and don't give up, and may the Lord be with you!"

The Rabbi accompanied me to the door and gave me a few packages of matzo for my fighting group. If we survive, he said, I should come together with Tsivia (Lubetkin) to see him again tomorrow. I promised and I kept my promise.



Seder in the Ghetto

The next evening I came with Tsivia to see Rabbi Mayzel (*Borzykowski*, pp. 61-63)

In the headquarters of the JFO, in the bunker at No. 18 Miła Street

The bunker at No. 18 Miła Street represented a most intricate structure of caves with the widest ramifications, built under ruins. The bosses of this bunker were the so-called "toughs," a group of underworld characters with thieves and bandits among them. The leader of the gang was one Shmuel Asher, a wealthy man, with a fat belly, a thick, ruddy neck and with a vulgar way of speaking. All his gang were wealthy men, like himself. After many years of easy profits he had been able to accumulate a great fortune, and now he had built a strong and wide-spread bunker under three blocks of devastated buildings.

Owing to the abundance of means at their disposal, the "toughs" had been able to provide the bunker with all necessary installations, like electric light, water faucets, and a kitchen. But, above all, they had been able to store large quantities of food in their bunker . . .

. . . The inner area of the bunker was enormous. Often when somebody set out from his corner to a distant point he went astray and was lost for some time. Only in the long and narrow corridor which connected all the surrounding cellars could you walk in an erect, normal way. In all other places, to move from one cellar to another you had to walk bent over because of the unusually low ceilings of the cellars . . .

Each cellar or cave in which the Jews dwelt had its special name. These names served as address and were designed to facilitate orientation in the bunker. The terminology included some very characteristic indications, symbolic of the time and of the situation of the Jews in that bunker, for instance, Treblinka, Trawniki, Poniatów, Piaski and many

others. These were the names of the Nazi death camps of evil fame . . .

. . . In order to realize what Treblinka represented, it was enough to stay a couple of minutes in the cellar of that name. This was a cellar in which, at the most, eight or ten persons might gather, but actually there were about thirty . . .

. . . The heat was unbearable and sometimes reached 60 or even 70 degrees Celsius (140 to 158 Far.). Everyone was literally swimming in his own and everyone else's sweat. Not for a moment did anyone stop using the towel with which he kept wiping off the sweat running in streaks down his half-naked body . . .

The first members of the Fighting Organization to enter the bunker at No. 18 Miła Street were the commanders. They were well received by the bosses who showed great respect for the fighters. The leaders of the "toughs" said that they would be glad to share all they possessed with them and would help as much as they could. After most of the bases of the Fighting Organization were destroyed, members of other fighting groups started streaming into No. 18 Miła Street and all were similarly received as honored guests. As time went on, about one hundred fighters were gathered in the bunker on 18 Miła Street and at the end it was almost the only base of the Fighting Organization.

At the same time, while the number of fighters in the bunker at No. 18 Miła Street kept growing steadily, the bunker was also invaded by a considerable number of civilians who were compelled to leave their bunkers under the burning buildings . . .

This flood of people made the food situation simply disastrous . . .

. . . Such elementary food articles of prime necessity as bread and potatoes were completely lacking. There was some flour, peas, groats, etc. But how could you manage to prepare meals for several hundred persons, when the night,

which was the only opportunity for cooking, was so short? . . . Wherever you looked, you saw two distinct human types. On the one hand, you clearly saw disorganization, impulsive outbursts, individual action, fear of one's own shadow, on the other—a well-trained unit with a functioning organization, where no one acted on his own and responsibility was shared by all . . .

. . . Every evening, after nightfall, intensive life started. In the first place a conference of group commanders was held, in which each commander made himself acquainted with the battle-plan for that night as set up by the high command. After this conference a meeting of each group was held under the chairmanship of its commander. These meetings were usually short; their purpose was to assign each member of the group to his specific task, in accordance with the general plan set up by the high command . . .

(*Borzykowski*, pp. 91-101)

On May 8 the Germans discovered and raided the headquarters at Mita 18. They sent heavy reinforcements to surround the place. After a fierce battle lasting two hours the Germans apprehended a number of armed insurgents. But when they realized that it was impossible to take the position by force they tossed a smoke bomb inside the headquarters and placed explosives at the entrances to the bunker.

. . . When the Germans called out, the "toughs" and the civilians surrendered, but none of our fighters. The call was repeated. The Germans announced that everyone who came out would be taken to work; all the others would be shot at once. Our comrades entrenched themselves near the entrance and waited with their weapons ready for the Germans. Finally the Germans began to send gas into the bunker. They let in a small quantity of gas, then stopped, trying to break their spirit with a prolonged suffocation. A terrible death faced the 120 fighters.

Aryeh Wilner was the first to cry out: "Come, let us destroy ourselves. Let's not fall into their hands alive." The suicides began. Pistols jammed and the owners begged their friends to kill them. But no one dared to take the life of a comrade. Lutek Rotblatt fired four shots at his mother but, wounded and bleeding, she still moved. Then someone discovered a hidden exit, but only a few succeeded in getting out this way. The others slowly suffocated in the gas. Thus the best of the Jewish fighters met death, one hundred in all; among them was Mordechai Anielewicz, our handsome commander whom we had all loved.

(*Lubetkin, Commentary*, p. 407)

The last stage of the military operations.

The large-scale action was terminated on May 16, 1943 with the blowing up of the Warsaw synagogue.

(*From the teletype message of May 15, 1943*.)

A special unit once more searched the last block of buildings which was still intact in the ghetto, and subsequently destroyed it. In the evening the chapel, mortuary, and all other buildings on the Jewish cemetery, were blown up or destroyed by fire.

On May 24, 1943, the final figures were compiled by Major General Stroop. He reported:

"Of our total of 56,065 caught, about seven thousand were destroyed in the former ghetto during large-scale operation. Six thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine Jews were destroyed by transporting them to T. II [Treblinka Camp no. 2]; the sum total of Jews destroyed is therefore 13,929. Beyond the number of five to six thousand Jews were destroyed by being blown up or by perishing in the flames . . . A total of 631 dug-outs were destroyed."

(*Stroop, in Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. III, pp. 726-727, 772-773*)

Additional explanations by General Juergen Stroop. General Stroop was arrested after the War by the Allies, extradited to Poland, jailed and interrogated in Warsaw and finally sentenced to death (July 1951). He was interviewed several times in his cell in the Warsaw jail by the Jewish historian, Dr. Joseph Kermish, member of the staff of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (on March 11, 1948, and later). From these interviews published in BFG., Vols. I and III (cf. Bibliographical Notes) we have selected some poignant and characteristic questions and answers.

Stenographic record of the first interview with Stroop.

Question: We know that you arrived in the General Government on April 17, in the evening. This was a Saturday. On Sunday a conference with the chief of the Warsaw police, von Sammern took place, and on Monday the action started. We are interested to know what happened in the first hours.

Answer: On April 19, at six o'clock in the morning, Colonel von Sammern started the action. Since he was familiar with the area, he took over the command after the necessary preparations had been agreed upon with me. We had arranged that on April 19, at nine o'clock in the evening, I would come into the ghetto, which was unknown to me until then and where I had never been before. At half past seven, Sammern appeared in my headquarters and declared that all was lost in the ghetto and that the forces which he had sent there had been repulsed. There were also dead and wounded, their number I cannot recall. Sammern suggested that he appeal to Cracow for Stukas to bomb the ghetto and to quell the uprising in this way . . .

Question: On April 23 an order from Himmler came through General Krueger. What was it?

Answer: Himmler telegraphed me to use all my energy and all available means to carry out my task of crushing the uprising. Himmler also ordered me, as did Krueger later, to report daily.

Question: Who gave the order to burn down the ghetto? **Answer:** Himmler ordered that the ghetto be burnt as quickly as possible.

Question: When?

Answer: Yes, first in January, 1943, and again in the meantime, when he was in Warsaw. We were to use any available means, this was his order which was first transmitted to Cracow¹ and to Sammern. I do not know whether all the buildings had to be blasted. It was planned to put SS sappers from Nuremberg at our disposal. Sammern told me that he would be compelled to make use of any means and also to blast. After the first fire it appeared that fire was a good means. An SS officer from the so-called Building Department, Warsaw, who was connected with this, had given his opinion and advice, as an expert, that the most practical way would be to set everything on fire, and I decided to do so.

Question: Why did you call it the "great" action?

Answer: It was so called by Sammern.

Question: When do you think this "great" action was finished?

Answer: After the blasting of the synagogue, on Sunday evening.

Question: Who gave the order to blast the synagogue? Did not the synagogue stand outside the ghetto walls?

Answer: The order was given by Himmler. It is not mentioned in the report. It was an order which Krueger transmitted to me on the telephone, that it was to be done. Krueger had gone there once, or twice. He was not satisfied, then he called me on the phone.

Question: Why was all this considered so important?

Answer: From the Governor of Warsaw, Dr. Fischer, as well as from the military commander of Warsaw, I heard that the spot was important as a place for reserves. At any cost an uprising had to be prevented from breaking out. Dr. Fischer,

¹ To the SS and Police Headquarters.

with whom I often talked in the first days, called my special attention to this point. All those gentlemen expressed the belief that the uprising in the ghetto was the forerunner of a general uprising in Warsaw.

Question: It was expected that the action would be completed in three days. Why did it last so long?

Answer: To this I would like to make the following remarks. Sannern had been in Warsaw for two years. On the basis of such long experience he ought to have known exactly about all this. So far as I know, he had carried out many liquidations. On the ground of his experiences, he had reckoned that the whole ghetto would be emptied in three days. Eventually the machines could be transported.¹ He held that the German command was ignorant of everything.

Question: About the blasting of the synagogue?

Answer: I got the order to demolish the great synagogue. [At No. 5, Tomackie]. I don't remember whether another synagogue was meant. Anyway, I applied the order to this synagogue. This order was issued by Sannern-Frankenegg before the start of the action. The order of Himmler was later confirmed to me by Governor Fischer and by Frank [Hans Frank, the Governor General]. This matter had already been agreed on by them and Himmler previously. (BFG., vol. III, no. 1-2, pp. 158, 163-165, 171)

(from another interrogation of Stroop):

Question No. 5: With what kind and duration of resistance did the German command reckon?

Answer: The German command in the ghetto, and notably my predecessor the SS and police leader, Colonel Sannern-Frankenegg, who had arranged the last "cleansings," didn't count on any resistance at all. It is known that partial "cleansings" had already taken place in the ghetto before. It was Dr. von Sonnegg's opinion that the last cleansing which he

¹ From the workshops of the liquidated ghetto.

wanted to carry out would follow the same course as before. According to his report made on the eve of the action, he had received not long before information from the ghetto that armed resistance was to be expected. But until the fight actually broke out, he did not believe it. As was his duty, he had transmitted the news to General Krueger, who could have issued an appropriate order at that time.

Question No. 10: What kinds of different Jewish fighting groups were there, and how could their identity be established?

Answer: As far as could be established, there were several main fighting groups and a number of smaller detachments of shock-troops. Many lists of names were found later with the positions of the guards indicated, etc. I believe there were units which consisted of about eighty men each. Women also took part in the fighting. In connection with this it was understood that there was a *hahutzim* movement. Those women, it was said, put up fanatical resistance. It turned out later, when they surrendered or were taken prisoners, that they were wearing knee-length trousers (slacks) and flat caps.

Question No. 14 Did the Poles give aid to the fighting Jews? What was the nature of this aid?

Answer: There were connecting passages from outside into the ghetto. During the "cleansing," action it could often be established what was coming into the ghetto, but it was not known what was going out. What was needed for the fight was available in the ghetto. It was quite possible that some ammunition was thrown in over the walls. Since the Polish population had a definitely passive attitude, I am inclined to believe that the aid from this side was of no importance at all. It appears certain that there was a connection with the Polish resistance (underground) movement, but I don't believe that they extended any material help. The Polish police, which had formed an encircling chain on the outside, reported constantly that the sewer channels which

passed through the ghetto were occupied by young Poles who probably belonged to the Polish resistance movement. It was reported that through this way only those Jews could escape who were able to pay a one thousand zloty ransom. Those who could not do so were mercilessly forced to go back to the sewers. The Polish police helped with extraordinary energy to quell the ghetto uprising.

Question No. 27: Were any cases of break-down of morale reported among the military formations which took part in the liquidation of the Jews?

Answer: I cannot recall any such case.

(*BFG I, nos. 3-4, pp. 174-178*)

The impact of the ghetto revolt on the Nazis, on the Poles, and on public opinion, Jewish and non-Jewish, abroad. When the Devil himself got worried.

The Jewish revolt and the "exceedingly serious fights" were an unexpected event and a blow to Nazi prestige. Even Goebbels seemed to be worried about "what is to be expected of the Jews when they are in possession of arms."

April 25, 1943

From a report from the occupied areas I gather that a truly grotesque situation obtains in Warsaw. The Jews tried to leave the ghetto by subterranean passages. Thereupon these underground passages were flooded. The ghetto is now under artillery fire. When such conditions prevail in an occupied city, it certainly can't be said to be pacified. It is high time that we evacuate the Jews just as quickly as possible from the General Government.

May 1, 1943

Reports from the occupied areas contain no sensational news. The only noteworthy item is the exceedingly serious fights in Warsaw between the police and even a part of our

Wehrmacht on the one hand and the rebellious Jews on the other. The Jews have actually succeeded in making a defensive position of the ghetto. Heavy engagements are being fought there which led even to the Jewish Supreme Command's issuing daily communiqués. Of course this fun won't last very long. But it shows what is to be expected of the Jews when they are in possession of arms. Unfortunately some of their weapons are good German ones, especially machine guns. Heaven only knows how they got them.

May 22, 1943

The battle of the Warsaw Ghetto continues. The Jews are still resisting. On the whole, however, resistance is no longer dangerous and has virtually been broken. Within the area of the General Government assassinations, acts of sabotage, and raids by bandits are on the increase. Conditions there are in some respects truly chaotic.

(*Goebbels, Diaries, pp. 343-344, 350-351, 388*)

The Appeal of the JFO to the Poles.

On the fifth day of the battle, the Jewish Armed Resistance Organization published a manifesto addressed to the Polish Underground, and to the inhabitants of our capital conveying greetings from the Jewish Underground Fighters. Various sectors of the Polish Underground Labor Movement immediately responded with messages of solidarity and admiration. On the whole, the attitude of the Polish Underground towards the battle of the Warsaw ghetto was marked with respect for the fighters and with esteem for their daring. However, this attitude varied in accordance with the different viewpoints on the Jewish problem of the various parts of the Polish underground. The capital city of Poland, as well as the entire country, seethed with excitement because of the battle of the ghetto. During the battle,

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

the Coordination Committee of the Bund and the Jewish National Committee issued daily communiques on the battle, which appeared in Polish clandestine publications and were broadcasted abroad by the Polish clandestine radio station "Świt". . .

"It is a fight for our freedom as well as yours."

Manifesto to the Poles:

"Poles, citizens, soldiers of Freedom! Through the din of German cannons, destroying the homes of our mothers, wives and children; through the noise of their machine-guns, seized by us in the fight against the cowardly German police and SS men; through the smoke of the ghetto that was set on fire, and the blood if its mercilessly killed defenders, we, the slaves of the ghetto, convey heartfelt greetings to you. We are well aware that you have been witnessing breathlessly, with broken hearts, with tears of compassion, with horror and enthusiasm, the war that we have been waging against the brutal occupant these past few days."

"Every doorstep in the ghetto has become a stronghold and shall remain a fortress until the end. All of us will probably perish in the fight, but we shall never surrender. We, as well as you, are burning with the desire to punish the enemy for all his crimes, with a desire for vengeance. It is a fight for our freedom, as well as yours; for our human dignity and national honor, as well as yours. We shall avenge the gory deeds of Oświęcim, Treblinka, Bełżec and Majdanek!

Long live the fraternity of blood and weapons in a fighting Poland!

Long live Freedom!

Death to the hangmen and the killers!

We must continue our mutual struggle against the occupant until the very end!

"Jewish Fighting Organization."
(*Report B*, pp. 47, 51)

260

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

The voice of the Polish underground press: Rada Narodowa (The National Council)—Organ of the Polish National Council.

Warsaw — April 28, 1944 — No. 7

. . . Warsaw has been the witness of a tragedy unheard of in the whole world. Tens of thousands of people were burned alive, and among the ashes, capturing one building after another, the criminals pushed ahead triumphantly. The defense of the Warsaw ghetto, which lasted from April 19 to the middle of May, 1943, was not an insignificant, isolated skirmish, but a regular battle with the overwhelming power of modern German weapons, with tanks, artillery, hand grenades, and flame throwers, with gas bombs, incendiary bombs and airplanes.

What gave the defenders, who lacked any substantial quantity of ammunition and arms, the strength to hold out for many weeks against the thrust of such a powerful and dangerous force?

The myth that the Jewish fighters were led by professional and well-trained military men must be refuted. It is a definite fact that there was not a single army officer among the commanders of the Jewish fighters. The leaders in the fighting were men who had been active in labor and youth organizations. The chief commander of the fighters and their inspiring leader was the twenty-four year old Mordecai Anielewicz, who previously had been connected with the youth movement. He perished in the battle together with all the members of his staff. All these leaders of the Jewish fighters had risen from the rank and file of the people. Their guiding star was the yearning for social and national liberation . . .

Głos Warszawski (The Voice of Warsaw).

Third year — Warsaw, April 18, 1943 No. 31

. . . The struggle taken up by the handful of defenders

261

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

of the Warsaw ghetto came too late to influence the fate of the Jewish population, which had already been almost exterminated. However, to the Polish people it pointed the way to escape extermination. . . .

. . . The memory of those who perished, unknown to posterity, is written in golden letters in the annals of the struggle of Poland and the rest of the fighting Europe.

In the Warsaw ghetto the powerful military machine which the Nazi criminals had at their disposal suffered a heavy moral blow. A handful of poorly armed and wholly isolated fighters put up a strong resistance against elite units of artillery and armored tanks. The despicable enemy could break the resistance only by setting the whole ghetto on fire, using airplanes, and even gas bombs . . .

The Voice of the Polish writers.

Fragments of a great poem published in Warsaw in 1944 in the clandestine publication: Z otchłani (From the Abyss). Jan Wajdelota is the undercover name of the Polish poet Tadeusz Sarnaeki.

POSTHUMOUS RHAPSODY ON MARTYRDOM

By Jan Wajdelota

. . . O Reader, draw over your forehead
The black cloth of mourning and pray till your prayer
Will bring us the prophet who will, for the anguish, the
pain and the courage,
Discover the meaning, mysterious and sacred, the words,
sufficient and flaming.
He will dip them in the blood of his being and string them
on the thread of his rhythm,
And tell us the deed of the Jew, the immortal deed of the
ghetto.

. . . Meanwhile the battle continued. Time hurried,
unhalted,

262

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

And wondered and queried: is this a delusion or real—
This battle unequal of might overwhelming with the ghetto
of Warsaw?

Quite real it was, and myself was the witness. O Tempest,
Cover the shrieks of the dying and beat on the drums of
the living!

May pallor of death now go forth from the groans and the
tortures,

Let horror of death now leap in halls and in parlors,

Let the smell of corpses fill men's dwellings in lasting
remembrance.

. . . You, Germans, perhaps you'll yet boast the guilt of
your misdeeds

And call on some Wagner to put into music the barbaric
madness—

Some new Nibelungen. But the song will be drowned in the
cries of the infants

Whom you have so merrily murdered by thousands and
millions.

Drenched in the blood of your victims, the notes will go mad

And furiously leap at the throat of the shameless conductor.

The horns will refuse to regale you with savage heroics,

Instead they will roar to the world the depth of your
outrage . . .

Warsaw, March 1, 1944

(A. Glanz-Leyelless: Poems from the Warsaw Ghetto, p. 136)

TO THE JEWS

By Władysław Broniewski

To the memory of Szmul Zygielbojm

From Polish towns and cities are heard no cries of despair

For the Warsaw ghetto defenders fell like an army guard.

My words I soak in blood, my heart I drench with tears,

For you, O Polish Jews, a Polish errant bard.

263

Not people but blood-stained beasts, not soldiers but executioners
 Carry the scourge of death for you, your children and wives.
 They choke you in lethal chambers, they slay you in lye-filled cars,
 Deriding your helpless mien, as they take away your lives.
 You lifted up a stone, to hurl at the cannoneer
 Who with precision and skill aimed at you his gun.
 Oh, all ye Sons of Maccabees, you too know how to die,
 In this hopeless war, four years ago begun.
 It should be deeply engraved, in every Polish heart,
 That our home was invaded, that our brothers were killed.
 That we have been united by the firing squad and Oświęcim
 By each nameless grave, and each human heart stilled.
 Above the Warsaw ruins, one peaceful sun will rise
 When strife of many years will end with victory.
 To each man will be given life, liberty and law.
 One race alone will rule, of men noble and free.

(Translated from the Polish by Christine Świniarska)

But there were also different views . . .

April 1943

Among the knots of people who gathered at Świętojerska and Krasieński Square to watch the progress of the Jews' fight, all sorts of opinions were heard. Many were sympathetic, but one would often hear a cynical "Thank heaven the Germans are doing this for us." The broad mass of the Polish people was completely disorientated. Most of them had no understanding of what the uprising meant for the Jews, or even for the Poles . . .

Even among the members of the organized underground, who expressed friendliness to the ghetto fighters, there was no stomach for a brush with the occupying power in order to help the Jews. "An open fight at this time," they said, "would mean complete extermination for all of us." They refused to organize street demonstrations and turned down

our request for a protest strike as a gesture of sympathy.
 (Goldstein, p. 194)

The Reaction in London

One of the central agencies for contacts with the Polish and Jewish underground in Warsaw was the Polish Government-in-Exile in London. The Jewish representatives in the Polish National Council in London (Dr. Isaac Ignacy Schwarzbart, Szmul Zygelbojm, and later Emanuel Szerer) received many reports from Poland and sent back messages and financial aid through underground channels. From his collection of documents Dr. Schwarzbart (now in New York City), gave us the following documents describing the heartrending struggle for rescue and assistance to the Warsaw ghetto.

Two days before the ghetto uprising, on April 17, 1943, Dr. Schwarzbart broadcast, with the permission of the Polish Government (which was indispensable for such broadcasts) through the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) in London a message of encouragement to the Jews in Poland. Here are some selections from this broadcast, in an English translation:

"I address you again, Brothers and Sisters, on the eve of Passover. It is a feast of liberty, celebrated in captivity. We join you in our thoughts, grieved by the news of the gehenna of your sufferings, which you are enduring, together with the Polish nation, every hour, day after day. We can clearly see the martyrdom of Oświęcim, Beżec, Ozorków.¹ We see before our eyes the sufferings of Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Lwów, and Wilna. Not for a single moment does the picture of limitless cemeteries amongst Polish woods and fields

¹ At that time probably erroneously cited as an extermination camp instead of the nearby Chelmno.

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

disappear from our eyes, nor does the picture of death chambers and places of execution. We hear the beating of your martyred hearts, our dear Brothers.

Perhaps you will hear this voice of your brother. Perhaps you will be told about it. You should know that we live with only one thought: how to help you, how to liberate you, how to bring the day of liberation to you and the whole country. We know that you often accuse us of not making all possible efforts to help you. I wish you to know that your accusations, born of pain and sufferings, are not justified. I want you to know that we are endeavoring to move the world and its conscience.

The National Council of Poland has raised its voice in your defense and in that of the whole country. The Polish Government has appealed to the conscience of all nations in a circular note to all Allied Governments. We, Polish Jews abroad, wherever we are, in all parts of the world, have raised our voices against your sufferings, and we are doing it every day. Together with us the Jews all over the world are doing the same . . .

The same is being done by the Jewish and non-Jewish press of the whole world. Don't suffer from the thought of our alleged inactivity. Rather take strength from our constant activities. Our spirit of solidarity with you is as strong and unbreakable as a rock. We have moved not only the Jewish world but the Christian world, too. High Christian dignitaries raised their voices in your defense. Shortly before his death Cardinal Hinsley did it. The same was done by the Archbishop of Canterbury . . .

I send you greetings and encouragement from our soldiers in the Polish Army . . ."

On April 22, 1943 Dr. Schwarzbart received from the Polish Ministry of the Interior the following letter (in Polish):

266

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

London, April 21, 1943
SECRET

L.dz.K. 1909/43

To Dr. I. Schwarzbart

Member of the National Council of the Polish Republic in London.

Upon instruction of Minister Mikołajczyk I convey to you the text of a cable received from Poland under the date of April 6, 1943 and decoded on April 20 and destined for you.

"Dr. Schwarzbart, London, Dr. Silberschein, Geneva, M. Neustadt, Tel Aviv. Please move earth and heaven instantly to raise subsidies from all world institutions via London. To save children and our active workers. We must have \$100,000 to save our active workers by way of exchange. Any day may lead to the extinction of the remnants of Polish Jewry.

Signed: Ignacy [Schiper], Menahem [Kirszenbaum], Kafter [D. Guzik], Johanan [Morgenstern], Józef [Sack], Council of Organized Zionist Centrum and Poale Zion Right. On behalf of the Minister

Paweł Siudak

Director of the Department
for Social Affairs

Dr. Schwarzbart immediately forwarded the contents of this cable to Abraham Silberschein in Geneva, to Meilech Neustadt in Tel Aviv, to Yitzhak Gruenbaum in Tel Aviv, to Dr. Stephen S. Wise and to Dr. Nahum Goldmann in New York as well as to Dr. Chaim Weizmann, at that time in the United States, and conferred with Professor Selig Brodetsky and Berl Locker, both at that time in London, about the possibility of fulfilling the emergency requirements. He went to the Minister of Interior of the Polish Government in London, and urged direct help to be instantly sent

267

through the Polish Underground Government to the signatory Jewish organizations and gave a cable to be transmitted to them.

The cable, sent on April 30, 1943 reads (in English translation) as follows:

Council of Organized Zionist Centrum and Poale Zion Right for Ignacy, Menahem, Kaftor, Johanan, Józef.

I received your cable of April 6. I immediately informed Silberschein and Neustadt. I cabled to Yitzhak and Stephen as well as to Chaim who is together with him. I also spoke to Selig and Berl. I received assurance from Minister Mikolajczyk that he issued instructions to give you the required help. As soon as possible we shall send you further help. Today I received a telegram from Yitzhak that he is sending a certain amount for you through Berl. I do not know yet how much. Our thoughts are always with you. We are doing everything possible to save the children and the "active" [meaning the active part of the movement.-I. S.].

We know your sufferings. We know that Polish brothers are helping you. A delegate from Stephen, Chaim and Nahum is at present with us. I spoke today to an envoy who came from Theodor's birthplace [meaning Theodor Herzl's birthplace - Budapest. - I. S.]. We are trying to move heaven and earth. I have contacted all our organizations. It is difficult for me to console you, dear brothers, but do believe that day and night we are thinking how to organize real help for you. Send us through the same channels detailed information as frequently as possible. The Conference in Bermuda discussed your fate. I shall let you know the results. I have sent the telegram to the Executive. Heartiest greetings from the Executive, from Chaim [Weizmann], Selig [Brodetsky], Berl [Locker], Emil [Schmorak], Anselm [Reiss], Arieih [Tartakower], Leon [Kubowitzki], and from me.

Yours, Ignacy [Schwarzbart]

268

The cable reached the addressees and Dr. Schwarzbart was also assured by Minister Mikolajczyk that \$10,000 were sent by the Polish Government. However this amount did not reach the addressees until June, 1943. As late as May 21, 1943 Dr. Schwarzbart received from the Polish Minister of Interior two messages from the Jewish underground of Warsaw. The first one carried the date of dispatch from Warsaw of April 28. It reads as follows:

Today is the ninth day that the ghetto fights back. SS and Wehrmacht formations are laying siege to the ghetto. Artillery and flame throwers are employed and airplanes shower high explosives and incendiary bombs on the forty-thousand Jews who still remain in the ghetto. The Germans mine and blast blocks of houses where the residents put up resistance. The ghetto is burning and smoke covers the whole city of Warsaw. Men, women, and children who are not burnt alive are being murdered en masse. The mouths of the sewers are blocked by German guards. The Jews fight back furiously and have killed about a thousand of the enemy. They burn factories and stores of German war industry. The Polish population marvels at the spirit of the Jewish defense. The reaction of the Germans is that of shame and rage. The Jewish Fighting Organization addressed a proclamation to the people of Warsaw, and the Polish Worker's Parties paid tribute to the fighters of the ghetto. Only the power of the allied nations can offer immediate and active help now. On behalf of the millions of Jews burnt and murdered and burned alive, on behalf of those fighting back and all of us condemned to die we call the whole world: It is imperative that the powerful retaliation of the allies shall fall upon the bloodthirsty enemy immediately and not in some distant future, so that it will be quite clear what the retaliation is for. Our closest allies must at last understand the degree of responsibility which arises from such apathy in face of an unparalleled crime committed by the Nazis against a whole

269

nation, the tragic epilogue of which is now being enacted. The heroic rising, without precedent in history, of the doomed sons of the ghetto should at last awaken the world to deeds commensurate with the gravity of the hour.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Jewish Labor Movement in Poland: Berezowski [pseudonym of Dr. Leon Fajner]; on behalf of the Jewish National Council: Borowski [pseudonym of Dr. Adolf Berman].

The second message, handed to Dr. Schwarzbart on the same day, May 21, 1943, bore a surprising remark: Somewhere in Poland,¹ May 11, 1943 with the additional remark: Received on May 21, 1943.

This message reads:
L.dz.K. 2563/43
Nr. 90

Somewhere in Poland: May 11, 1943
Received: May 21, 1943

From the Delegate of the Government:

The heroic resistance of the ghetto of Warsaw continues with but a few strongholds holding out. The Jewish Fighting Organization shows supreme ability and courage. Klepfisch, who was one of the pillars of the armed resistance, a member of the Bund, died like a hero. German cruelties are gruesome. Many Jews are burnt alive while thousands are being shot or taken away to camps. Members of the presidency of the Jewish communal council were shot. They were Lichtenbaum, Wielikowski, Sztolcman, Szereszewski Stanislaw. A few thousands remain underground and in the work shops of the ghetto. The work shops' defenses are being overcome after stubborn resistance. The same goes for the shelters.

The Germans are shelling and setting on fire one block of houses after another. Explosions and fire everywhere. The ghetto is surrounded by police who block the sewers. Those

¹ In Polish: m.p.-miejsce postoju.

who flee the inferno are caught and shot. The Jewish Fighting Organization remains in the ghetto. While the epic of heroism is nearing its end and remnants of Jewish centers in the provinces are being completely wiped out, the free world, the world of justice, remains silent and apathetic. It is amazing. This is the third cable¹ within the last fortnight. Cable immediately what you have done. We expect financial help for the remnants who are trying to save themselves.

Signed: like the message dated April 28, 1943.

Dr. Schwarzbart never received an explanation why the first message was not given to him in London until May 21, although the Polish Government claimed to have secret cable contacts with and reports from Warsaw almost every day. Also the missing third message never reached him. In his diary of that time he wrote the following entry:

"Friday, May 21, 1943. Siudak gave me two telegrams from the Jewish National Committee and the Jewish Labor Organization in Warsaw. One of them is dated April 28. I can't understand why it was held back so long. Siudak blames the forwarding system. I have my doubts. I immediately forwarded both messages to Tel-Aviv and to America."

On May 22, 1943 Dr. Schwarzbart had begun to forward the above quoted messages to various Jewish organizations, to the US Ambassador in London, to the Allied governments-in-exile in London and to many leading British personalities (in politics, the church and letters), and to the British Government. From the answers he received the following may be quoted:

¹ Dr. Schwarzbart never received a third one, only the two mentioned here.

The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to him on May 26, 1943:

"I have duly received your letter with the horrifying messages enclosed. As you know, I have constantly pressed that we should at least undertake to provide asylum for those able to escape. I shall continue to press this, but how to help the people exactly inside Poland is beyond my comprehension. It is fearful to be so powerless while these appalling things are going on, but I see no means of action open to us."

The great humanitarian, author and statesman John H. Nicholson, wrote:

"I have really no words adequate to reply to your circular letter of the 22nd of May. I take it that you know my attitude to these matters or you would not have written to me. I certainly agree that it is action rather than words that is needed. I hope that those in authority will at last find a way."

To the two messages sent to Mr. Anthony Eden, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, only following answer was received in reply from Mr. Eden's secretary:

"I write on Mr. Eden's behalf to thank you for your letter of the 24th of May in which you enclosed two messages addressed to the late Mr. S. Zygelbojm and yourself by the Central Committee in Poland describing Jewish resistance to the Germans in the ghetto of Warsaw."

Szmul Zygelbojm's Suicide (May 11th, 1943).

A tragic result of the frantic and futile efforts of the Jewish representatives in London to stir the world from its callous indifference and to rush help to the oppressed Polish Jews was the suicide of Szmul Zygelbojm. Zygelbojm expected that his sacrifice would arouse the world to a more compassionate attitude towards the sufferings of the Jews and to

action against the Germans. The Polish writer and liaison officer, Jan Karcki, who visited Poland and the Warsaw ghetto in the fall of 1942, and came back to London with the appalling news, was an unwilling witness of the painful inner conflict which developed in Zygelbojm's mind and eventually led him to his momentous decision.

... I reported my experiences to outstanding members of the British and American governments, and to the Jewish leaders of both continents. I told what I had seen in the ghetto to some of the world's great writers—to H. G. Wells, Arthur Koestler, members of the P. E. N. Club—as they could describe it with greater force and talent than I. I told it to others, too, less well-known and to one, in particular, who will be heard from again.

In London, five weeks later, a meeting was arranged for me. To me, it was one of innumerable such meetings and not the most important . . . I expected one of the leaders of the Jewish Bund. His name was Szmul Zygelbojm. He had been in Poland until 1940, had worked with the Jewish Underground, had been a member of the Council of the Warsaw ghetto and had, I believe, even been held for a time as hostage by the Nazis.

... To me, Zygelbojm looked like a type I had often encountered among Jewish leaders. He had the hard, suspicious glance of the proletarian, the self-made man who could not be cajoled, and was constantly on the alert for falsehood. . . . "What do you want to hear about?" I asked.

"About Jews, my dear man. I am a Jew. Tell me what you know about the Jews in Poland."

... I answered with brutal simplicity and directness:

"Very well, then. This is what *they* want from their leaders in the free countries of the world, this is what *they* told me to say: "Let them go to all the important English and American offices and agencies. Tell them not to leave until they have obtained guarantees that a way has been decided upon

to save the Jews. Let them accept no food or drink, let them die a slow death while the world looks on. Let them die. This may shake the conscience of the world."

"It is impossible," he (Zygelboim) finally said, "utterly impossible. You know what would happen. They would simply bring in two policemen and have me dragged away to an institution. Do you think they will let me die a slow, lingering death? Never . . . they would never let me." . . . We shook hands, Zygelboim gazing directly into my eyes, intent and questioning.

"Mr. Karski, I do everything I can to help them. Everything. I'll do everything they demand—if only I am given a chance. You believe me, don't you?"

My answer was rather cold and impatient. I felt tired, frustrated, strained. So many interviews, so many meetings . . .

"Of course I believe you. I feel certain you will do all you can and all they demand. My God, every single one of us tries to do his best."

At the bottom, I think, I felt that Zygelboim was boasting or, at least, thoughtlessly promising more that he could perform. I felt nettled, harassed.

. . . Some weeks later I had all but forgotten Zygelboim in the endless grind of interviews and meetings. I was sitting in my room in Dolphin Square during a brief respite, resting, when the telephone rang.

"Mr. Karski, I was told to inform you that Szmul Zygelboim, a member of the Polish National Council and Representative of the Bund in London, committed suicide yesterday. He left some notes, saying that he did all he could to help the Jews in Poland but failed, that all his brothers will perish, and that he is joining them. He turned on the gas in his apartment."

I hung up.

At first I felt nothing at all, then a wave of mingled shock, grief, and guilt. I felt as though I had personally handed

Zygelboim his death warrant, even though I had been only the instrument.

(*Jan Karski, pp. 333, 334, 338*)

Final letter of farewell addressed by Zygelboim to the Polish President Władysław Raczkiewicz, and to Prime-Minister Władysław Sikorski.

I am taking the liberty of addressing my last words to you, and through you to the Polish government, to the Polish people, to the governments and peoples of all allied nations, and to the conscience of the world.

The last news received from Poland makes it clear that the Germans are determined to wipe out, with horrible brutality, the last remnants of the Jews who have survived in Poland. Behind the walls of the ghetto is now going on the last act of a tragedy unequalled in all history. The murderers themselves bear the primary responsibility for the crime of extermination of the whole Jewish population of Poland, but, indirectly, this responsibility also weighs on all humanity, on the peoples and governments of the allied nations, because they have not made any attempt to do something drastic to stall the criminal deeds. By looking on indifferently while helpless millions of tortured children, women and men were murdered, those nations have associated themselves with the criminals.

I wish to declare that the Polish government, although it has sought to influence the public opinion of the world, has not done so sufficiently. It has not taken any steps commensurate with the enormity of the drama that is now happening in Poland. Out of nearly three and a half million Polish Jews and seven hundred thousand Jews deported to Poland from other countries, in April of 1943 there survived—according to a report of the leader of the Underground Bund organization transmitted to us through delegates of the organization—only three hundred thousand. And the extermination continues.

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS

I cannot be silent. I cannot live while the remnants of the Jewish population of Poland of whom I am a representative, are perishing. My friends in the Warsaw ghetto died with weapons in their hands in the last heroic battle. It was not my destiny to die together with them but I belong to them, and in their mass graves.

By my death I wish to make my final protest against the passivity with which the world is looking on and permitting the extermination of the Jewish people.

I know how little human life is worth today, but as I was unable to do anything during my life, perhaps by my death I shall contribute to breaking down the indifference of those who may now at the last moment rescue the few Polish Jews still alive.

My life belongs to the Jewish people of Poland and therefore I give it to them. I wish that the handful which remains of the several million Polish Jews could survive to see, along with the Polish people, the liberation that shall transform Poland into a world of freedom with the justice of socialism. I believe that such a Poland will arise and that such a world will come.

I am sure that the President and the Prime Minister will convey my words to whom they are addressed and that the Polish government will soon begin all possible diplomatic action on behalf of those Polish Jews who are still alive. I bid farewell to everybody and to everything that was dear to me and that I have loved.

Szmul Zygelboim
(*Zygelboim-Book*, pp. 364-365)

From a letter of farewell to friends

... Maybe my death will achieve that which I did not succeed in achieving during my life, the starting of a definite action to rescue at least the less than three hundred thousand Jews who are the only survivors in Poland of the former

The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto

Jewish population of three and a half million. Now is the last minute for such an action ...

(*Zygelboim*, p. 366)

"Where will rescue come from?"

Farewell letter written by Mordecai Anielewicz on April 23, 1943.

(To Itzhak Cukierman)

Now it is quite clear for us—what happened has by far surpassed all our expectations. In the fight with the Germans we have strained our forces to the utmost. Now, however, our strength is weakening and dwindling. We stand at the brink of the abyss. Twice already we have forced the Germans to withdraw, but they came back with their forces redoubled. One of our groups held out for about forty minutes, another group fought for six hours. The mine, which was hidden with the "brush-makers," has exploded. Thereafter we attacked the Germans and inflicted heavy losses on them. Our losses, on the contrary, were, on the whole, light. Even this is an achievement. Z. fell at his machine-gun. I feel that great things are in the offing. What we have succeeded in creating will be of enormous value and importance.

We are forced by circumstances to take recourse to guerilla methods of fighting. Tonight six of our fighting groups are starting out. They have two tasks before them: the scouting of the area and the seizing of arms. Remember—small arms are no longer of any value to us, we make use of them only in sporadic cases. What we need is rifles, hand-grenades, automatic guns and explosives.

I am not able to describe to you the conditions in which the Jews in the ghetto "live" now. Individual persons will perhaps manage to hold out in such sufferings. But the rest

will die out sooner or later. Their fate is sealed, though they are still trying to hide in all kinds of fissures and rat holes. It is impossible to light a candle because of the lack of air.

We bid you farewell, you on the "outside." Perhaps a miracle will happen, and we will see each other one day. Still I doubt it, I doubt it very much . . . The last wish of my life has come true. Jewish self-defense has become reality. Jewish resistance and vengeance have been transformed into acts. I am happy to have found myself among the first fighting Jews in the ghetto.

Where will rescue come from?"

*(Dos naye Lebn, Lodz, April 19, 1945
Zew Młodych, Lodz, January 1946)*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Last Chapter

Commercial utilization of murder: the Germans clean up and salvage what they can from the ruins.

In June, 1943, the Germans recruited Polish workers to clean up the ruins, to tear down the tottering buildings, and to salvage whatever iron and other useful metals they could. They also formed a separate labor unit of Jews from Greece, France, Rumania, and Hungary, who were brought from various labor camps. They wore prison dress of striped trousers and gray blouses and were quartered in the Gęsiówka, the building on Gęsia Street which had once housed the institutions of the Jewish community. The Poles and Jews worked in complete isolation from each other and were not permitted to communicate. The Jewish workers were prisoners from camps and were so treated. The Poles were volunteers and were permitted to pass in and out of the ruined ghetto. . . .

Many months after the uprising, one could still hear the demolition explosions. Digging out and cleaning up the ghetto was a long job. The rotting corpses were burned. The Germans built two small railroads to bring the salvage out of the ruins. One went through the Jewish Cemetery on Okopowa and the other through Bonifraterska Street.

When the Germans finished, nothing was left in the ghetto except a broad field of rubble, three stories deep.

(Goldstein, pp. 204-205)



The Jewish Student Online Research Center (JSOURCE)

Aims of the Jewish Fighting Organization^{1*}

(1942)

..At the end of October 1942 a meeting was held at the Ha-Shomer [Left-wing Zionist] Club in 61 Mila Street. Those present were: Ha-Shomer – Mordecai [Anielewicz]; He-Halutz – Yitzhak [Cukierman]; and Po'alei Zion Smol [Left Labor Zionists] – Pola [Elster], Berlinski, Wasser...agenda...the defense of the Warsaw ghetto. After an exhaustive discussion in which the following members took part – Pola, Berlinski, Wasser, Mordecai and Yitzhak – we reached a joint conclusion: (1) That the Jewish Fighting Organization has been established in order to prepare the defense of the Warsaw ghetto; (2) In order to teach a lesson to the Jewish Police, the *Werkschutz*,^{2*} the managers of the "shops"^{3*} and all kinds of informers. When we reached the issue of appointing the leadership, a touchy discussion developed. Should there be one authority or two: military, or military and political? The members of Ha-Shomer and He-Halutz strongly oppose twofold authority. Twofold authority will lead to arguments that will hamper the work. It will take us back to the days on the eve of the Destruction, when the parties argued and did nothing. The members of Ha-Shomer and He-Halutz speak with derision and scorn of the political parties. The parties have no right to interfere in our affairs. Apart from the youth, after all, they will do nothing. They will only get in the way. One single military leadership must be established, so we can start on the job.

The members of Po'alei Zion Smol point out the faulty assumption of Ha-Shomer and He-Halutz on what they term the death of honor: "We are fighting for our lives. If a few of us fall in battle we will not make a tragedy of it. Every war claims its victims. If the political parties made certain mistakes it is not you who are entitled to judge them. It was not you who led the political struggle and not you who will lead it in the future... One must not sanction irresponsible acts that are likely to bring about the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto before its time. A group or organization that carries out weapon training contains within itself the aspiration and expectation of the happy moment when it will use these arms. We consider it to be an essential condition that a second authority be established which can judge clearly, from a political point of view, what the appropriate time is for the use of arms. Why are you so anxious, why are you so much afraid? Justice will always conquer. And even if we start out from the assumption that the ghetto will be destroyed and that we shall not be

accountable to anyone for our actions, as a political party we declare that we are responsible for our actions before the Jewish masses in the world and before our comrades abroad. We do not want anybody to stone our graves because we advised irresponsible action. If you do not agree that the political parties will control the fighting organization then you are creating conditions for us that do not permit us to continue to take part...."

As soon as there is agreement on twofold authority, military and political, the foundation stone will have been laid for the joint Jewish Fighting Organization. We have decided to widen the area of our work and to draw the Bund closer to us....

Yad Vashem Archives, JM/2598.

1* Member of the military staff of the Jewish Fighting Organization.

2* *Werkschutz* –the guard at places of employment and factories – the "shops."

3* "Shop" – Code name for a German enterprise, or an enterprise working by authority, and on behalf of the Germans.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

Call to Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto

(January 1943)

To the Jewish Masses in the Ghetto

On January 22, 1943, six months will have passed since the deportations from Warsaw began. We all remember well the days of terror during which 300,000 of our brothers and sisters were cruelly put to death in the death camp of Treblinka. Six months have passed of life in constant fear of death, not knowing what the next day may bring. We have received information from all sides about the destruction of the Jews in the Government-General, in Germany, in the occupied territories. When we listen to this bitter news we wait for our own hour to come, every day and every moment. Today we must understand that the Nazi murderers have let us live only because they want to make use of our capacity to work to our last drop of blood and sweat, to our last breath. We are slaves. And when the slaves are no longer profitable, they are killed. Every one among us must understand that, and every one among us must remember it always.

During the past few weeks certain people have spread stories about letters that were said to have been received from Jews deported from Warsaw, who were said to be in labor camps near Minsk or Bobruisk. *Jews in your masses, do not believe these tales. They are spread by Jews who are working for the Gestapo.* The blood-stained murderers have a particular aim in doing this: to reassure the Jewish population in order that later the next deportation can be carried out without difficulty, with a minimum of force and without losses to the Germans. They want the Jews not to prepare hiding-places and not to resist. Jews, do not repeat these lying tales.

Do not help the [Nazi] agents. The Gestapo's dastardly people will get their just desserts. *Jews in your masses, the hour is near. You must be prepared to resist, not to give yourselves up like sheep to slaughter. Not even one Jew must go to the train. People who cannot resist actively must offer passive resistance, that is, by hiding.* We have now received information from Lvov that the Jewish Police there itself carried out the deportation of 3,000 Jews. Such things will not happen again in Warsaw. The killing of Lejkin proves it. Now our slogan must be:

Let everyone be ready to die like a man!

January 1943

Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce (Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland), ARII/333.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Creation of the Jewish Fighting
Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto**

(March 1944)

...On Wednesday, July 22, 1942 [the eve of Tisha be-Av, Day of Mourning], the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto was begun. The Public Committee was immediately summoned to find out what the situation was and to take measures. Those attending the meeting included: L. Bloch, Shmuer Bresler [Breslav], Dr. A. Berman, Yitzhak Cukierman, Zisha Friedman, Josef Finkelstein-Lewartowski, D. Guzik, Yitzhak Giterman, Josef Kaplan, Menachem Kirszenbaum, Alexander Landau, M. Orzech, Dr. Emmanuel Ringelblum, Josef Sack, Szachna Sagan and Dr. Yitzhak Schiper. Opinions were divided. Representatives of the left-wing Zionist parties and of He-Halutz [Zionists] and also some of the men in public life called for active intervention in some way or other. The majority wanted to wait. How long? Until the situation became clearer. For rumors were circulating that no more than 50,000 to 70,000 Jews would be deported from Warsaw (old people, the sick, prisoners, beggars, etc.), and [after that] the *Aktion* would be finished....

On July 28, 1942, a meeting was held of He-Halutz and its youth-movement branches: Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, Dror, and Akiva. It was decided to set up the Jewish Fighting Organization YKA (*Yidische-Kampf-Organizatsie*). The organization signed proclamations which it issued in the Polish language with the initials ZOB: *Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa* – Jewish Fighting Organization. The members of the Command were: Bresler, Cukierman, Zivia Lubetkin, Mordecai Tenenbaum and Josef Kaplan. A delegation was sent to the Aryan side [i.e., outside the ghetto], to the Poles: Tosia Altman, Plotnicka, Leah Perlstein and Arie-Jurek Wilner, in order to make contact with the Polish Underground and to obtain weapons for the ghetto.

The fighting organization had been set up, but all the weapons there were in the ghetto at that time consisted of just one pistol...!

Yad Vashem Archives, O-25/96.

* From a report by Yitzhak Cukierman in Warsaw, March 1944. See document 126.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

The Last Letter from Mordecai Anielewicz

Warsaw Ghetto Revolt Commander*

(April 23, 1943)

It is impossible to put into words what we have been through. One thing is clear, what happened exceeded our boldest dreams. The Germans ran twice from the ghetto. One of our companies held out for 40 minutes and another – for more than 6 hours. The mine set in the "brushmakers" area exploded. Several of our companies attacked the dispersing Germans. Our losses in manpower are minimal. That is also an achievement. Y. [Yechiel] fell. He fell a hero, at the machine-gun. *I feel that great things are happening and what we dared do is of great, enormous importance....*

Beginning from today we shall shift over to the partisan tactic. Three battle companies will move out tonight, with two tasks: reconnaissance and obtaining arms. Do you remember, short-range weapons are of no use to us. We use such weapons only rarely. What we need urgently: grenades, rifles, machine-guns and explosives.

It is impossible to describe the conditions under which the Jews of the ghetto are now living. Only a few will be able to hold out. The remainder will die sooner or later. Their fate is decided. In almost all the hiding places in which thousands are concealing themselves it is not possible to light a candle for lack of air.

With the aid of our transmitter we heard the marvelous report on our fighting by the "Shavit" radio station. The fact that we are remembered beyond the ghetto walls encourages us in our struggle. Peace go with you, my friend! Perhaps we may still meet again! *The dream of my life has risen to become fact. Self-defense in the ghetto will have been a reality. Jewish armed resistance and revenge are facts. I have been a witness to the magnificent, heroic fighting of Jewish men in battle.*

M. Anielewicz

Ghetto, April 23, 1943

[M. Kann], *Na oczach swiata* ("In the Eyes of the World"), Zamosc, 1932
[i.e., Warsaw, 1943], pp. 33-34.

* Written to Yitzhak Cukierman.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Jewish Student Online
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"The Last Battle in The Great Tragedy"

(April 29, 1943)

...A week ago the second stage began in the brutal annihilation of the Polish Jews. The Germans set about expelling the 40,000 Jews who still remained in Warsaw. The ghetto replied with armed struggle. The Jewish Fighting Organization opened a war of the weak against the strong. With scant forces, few arms and little ammunition, without water, blinded by smoke and fire, the Jewish fighters defended streets and individual houses. In the dusk they withdrew step by step, more because of the fire that had taken hold in the close-built houses than because of the enemy who was equipped with modern military arms. They considered it a victory if a part of those imprisoned in the ghetto were able to escape; it was a victory in their eyes to die while their hands still grasped arms....

Yad Vashem Archives, O-25/25.

* From the Underground AK newspaper *Biuletyn Informacyjny* ("Information Bulletin"), No. 17, April 29, 1943.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

Report on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt

...The German units that penetrated into this area of the ghetto at dawn on April 19 were met with strong and effective fire by the defenders. A large number of Germans fell, dead or wounded. The resistance was so strong that the Germans brought up more and more additional units for the operation, including even field guns, flame-throwers and tanks. The situation was complicated by daring sallies on the part of the Jewish fighters, who spread out into sections outside the streets they were defending, also by the systematic fire of the German attackers that poured into the ghetto from neighboring streets on the other side. The Gendarmerie and SS units did not gain control of the situation, and as a result a Wehrmacht unit was brought into the battle against the ghetto. Throughout Monday, April 19, and Tuesday, April 20, attacks continued by the Gendarmerie, the SS units and Army units on the ghetto, which was defending itself stubbornly, and all these attacks failed. Heavy shelling continued near the ghetto walls night and day without stopping. German columns in battle formation moved out many times for the assault. Hundreds of Germans fell dead or wounded, and the ghetto continued to defend itself. This brought about a change in the German tactics. They stopped making direct attacks on the ghetto and began instead to lay siege to it. Movement was stopped in a number of streets close to the ghetto on the Aryan side and the Jewish stronghold surrounded by a great ring of armed German units. The drainage channels were sealed. German guns began to bombard the ghetto with fire-bombs. Many houses went up in flames. For the past several days, huge clouds of smoke have been rising up over the ghetto, and at night tremendous flames are seen over the northern part of the city. Special loudspeakers ceaselessly call on the inhabitants of the ghetto to surrender. Some of the Jews obeyed the substance of these appeals. Fewer than 10,000 persons lined up at the concentration points named by the Germans and were taken outside of Warsaw. But these were old people, including many women, the aged and weak among the men. All the rest, mainly young men, numbering more than 20,000, are fighting stubbornly. It is quite clear that in this battle the Jewish side is also suffering heavy losses. But it is a fact that in the six days that have passed since the Germans began the *Aktion* against the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews have not suffered defeat, and they reveal absolute determination to continue their self-defense and the struggle, and it looks as though it may continue for a longer period.

This war between the Jews and the Germans has awakened feelings of sympathy and admiration on the Aryan side of Warsaw, and shame among the Germans, who feel rightly that the situation that has come about in

Warsaw is an uncommon blow to German prestige. It now appears that the Gestapo, which knows all and can do all, did not succeed in preventing the excellent preparations made by the Jewish population for the struggle and for its defense, with the result that the combined forces of the Gendarmerie, the SS and the Army were unable up to now to overcome this resistance despite the assaults they have been mounting for the past six days....

Archiwum Zakladu Historii Partii (Archives of the Institute for the Party's History), 202/I-33, pp. 343-344.

* The reference is to the Polish Underground leadership, which operated under the Polish Government-in-Exile in London.

Source: Yad Vashem

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**The Jewish Student Online
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Mordechai Anielevich



(1919 or 1920 - 1943)

Commander of the Warsaw ghetto uprising was born in a poor family in a poor neighborhood. After he completed his high school studies, he joined the "Hashomer Hatzair" youth movement. As a youngsters guide he excelled as a leader and organizer.

In September 7, 1939, a week after the war broke out, Anielevich escaped with his youth movement friends from Warsaw to the east regions, assuming that the Polish army would restrain the German advance. In September 17, the Soviet army occupied the eastern regions of Poland. Anielevich tried to pass the border to Romania to open a route for youngsters to Israel. Anielevich was caught and put in a Soviet jail. After he was released he returned to Warsaw Ghetto passing through a lot of communities on his way.

Anielevich stayed in Warsaw a short time and left for Vilna, Lithuania, where a lot of refugees, youth movement's members and political groups came from the west. The city was annexed to the USSR a short time before.

Anielevich demanded from his colleagues to send back a group of members to the occupied territories in Poland to continue the educational and political activities underground. He and his girlfriend, Mira Fukrer, were among the first volunteers that went back to Warsaw.

From January 1940, Anielevich became a professional underground activist. As a leader of his youth movement, he organized cells and youngsters groups, instructed, participated in underground publications, organized meetings and seminars and visited other groups in different cities.

Anielevich dedicated part of his time learning Hebrew, reading and

studying History, sociology and economics. At the same time his point of view was formatted and expressed in publications and lectures.

His activities changed when the news about the mass killings of Jews in Eastern Europe were known. Immediately Anielevich start organizing self-defense groups inside the Warsaw Ghetto. His first attempts to connect with Polish forces outside the Ghetto, acting under orders of the Polish government in London, failed. In March - April 1942, Anielevich was one of the founders of the "Anti-fascist group". The "group" did not fulfill the expectations of Zionist groups, and, after a wave of arrests of communist members the organization, was dismantled.

When the major deportation to extermination camps started in Warsaw Ghetto, in the summer of 1942, Anielevich was visiting in the south-west region of Poland, that was annexed to Germany, trying to organize armed defense. At his return he found only 60,000 Jews from 350,000, and a small "Jews Fighter Organization", without any weapons and with a lot of difficulties, a lost of fighters and failures. Anielevich started to reorganize the group with great success because there was much support for the idea of fighting after the major deportation of all the underground groups. Next step was to compose a public committee and a coordination committee. In November 1942 Anielevich was elected as chief commander. Until January 1943, a few fighter groups of youth movement members were based in the ghetto. A connection with the Polish army commanded from London was made and weapons were supplied from the Polish side of the city.

In January 18, 1943, the Nazis planned the second big deportation of the Jews to the extermination camps from the Warsaw Ghetto. The headquarters organization did not have enough time to discuss the possible response but the armed groups decided to react. The resistance was lead in two points. Anielevich commanded the battle in the main street. The fighters joined the deported and when they got a signal between the streets Zamenhoff and Niska they attacked the escort. The Jews escaped and dispersed. Most of Hashomer Hatzair's members were killed in this battle. This was a very significant move because four days after the revolt, the Nazis stopped the operation.

The next three months - January to April 1943 - was an intensive preparation and very decisive period for the underground organization, under Anielevich's command. In April 19, on the eve of Pesah, the last deportation began, and the uprising broke out. At the first the superiority of the resistance was clear, and the Nazis suffered many losses. Three long days of battles between streets took place. The Nazis greatly outnumbered the resistance in soldiers and weapons, so that the hundreds of fighters, with only hand revolvers, had no chances. However, the Jewish fighters didn't surrender, and even survivors in shelters did not exit them despite the calls and promises. The Nazis forces were compelled to burn house by house and to go through every shelter in the Ghetto. The fight lasted for four weeks, and in May 16, 1943, after a lot of casualties, General Jurgen Stroop could report that the Ghetto was defeated and "there is no more Jewish suburb in Warsaw".

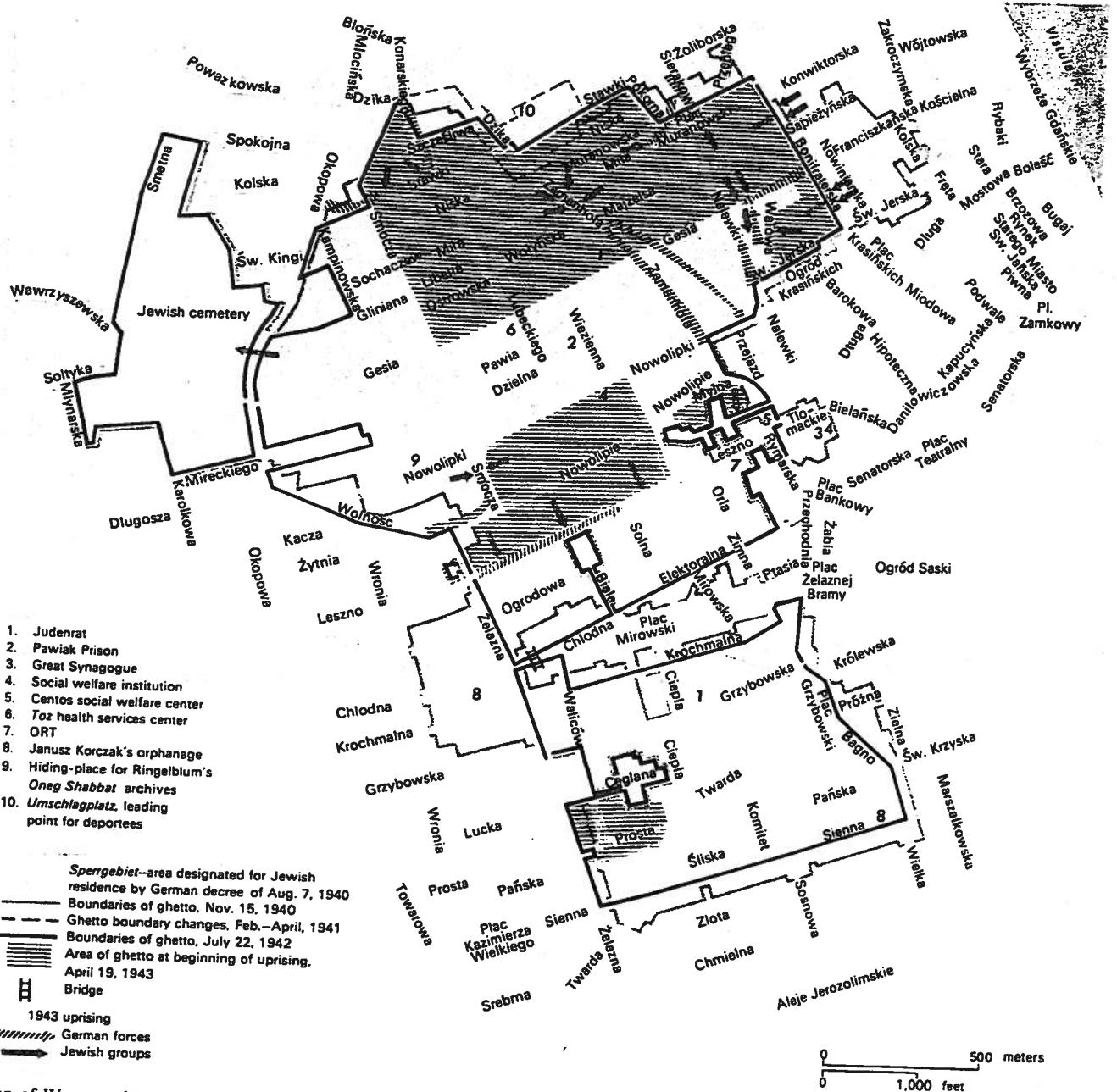
The first days of battles Anielevich commanded the resistance forces. When the street fight ended he moved to the headquarters shelter to Mila 18 street. On May 8, Anielevich was killed in the headquarters bunker together with a few colleagues.

In Israel Kibbutz, "Yad Mordechai" was named in memory of Mordechai Anielevich, and a monument is erected in his memory.

Source: Moreshet Mordechai Anielevich Memorial

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Plan of Warsaw ghetto, 1940-43. After J. Ziemian, *The Borders of Warsaw Ghetto*, Jerusalem, 1971.

From time to time the authorities rounded up able-bodied people in the streets and sent them to slave labor camps. In April 1941 some 25,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto lived in these camps under conditions that rapidly decimated their numbers. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet War (June 1941), many of the inmates in the camps were executed.

It is estimated that by the summer of 1942, over 100,000 Jews died in the ghetto proper. Nevertheless, the morale of the ghetto inhabitants was not broken, and continual efforts were made to overcome the German decrees and organize relief. Illegal workshops were gradually established for manufacturing goods to be smuggled out and sold on the "Aryan" side. These included leather products, metals, furniture, textiles, clothing, and millinery. At the same time raw materials were smuggled in. In this way...

to combat hunger and disease. The *Centos for social welfare, the *Toz for health services, and other organizations re-formed and established hospitals, public kitchens (daily providing over 100,000 soup rations), orphanages, refugee centers, and recreation facilities. In each block of houses a committee for charitable work functioned and also engaged in cultural and educational activities, such as reading groups, lectures, and musical evenings. A network of schools, both religious and secular, as well as trade schools functioned in the ghetto. Some of these schools were illegal and could operate only under the guise of soup kitchens. Similarly, medical, technical, and scientific training was given under the guise of trade courses. By the end of 1940 the Jewish historian, Emmanuel *Ringelblum, established a secret historical and literary society under the code name of...

One of the most dangerous popular myths to emerge from the Holocaust was the view that Jews were killed without resisting the Nazis. Such a charge implies that Jews were cowards who went "like sheep to the slaughter." In the minds of some people Jews were partly responsible for their own deaths; for, according to the myth, had they resisted violently, more Jews would have been saved.

First, let us look at other examples of oppression. Is a woman who has been raped a coward if she submitted to an attacker who held a knife at her throat? How do we react to the Christian martyrs who, without resistance, were slaughtered in the gladiator ring? Even if no victim of the Nazis had resisted, would we charge them with responsibility for their own murder? The issue of resistance by the oppressed is tinged with political overtones.

In this selection from *Never To Forget*, Milton Meltzer discusses the general issue of resistance, and compares Jewish and non-Jewish resistance. The author tries to explain that resistance was not easy for Jews or for citizens in the occupied countries. Are we to condemn the French for not rising to overthrow their oppressors? As Elie Wiesel has stated, "The question to be asked should not be why there was so little resistance, but how there was so much"?

Meltzer also indicates that open, armed conflict was not the only form of resistance. Young people today often think of resistance as the violent battle between two well-armed opponents. In reality, there are a variety of types of resistance, and open conflict is not always the wisest alternative.

Three times a week little Sima smuggled Jews out of the Minsk ghetto, evading the SS guards, and led them to the forests of Staroje-Sielo, 50 kilometers away. . . .

Sima was a twelve-year-old girl with blonde hair, blue eyes, and dimples that showed when she talked. Her parents perished in the first German pogrom. In the beginning Sima lived outside the ghetto and carried out important assignments for the underground party committee. Later when we began to lead Jews out of the ghetto, Smolar brought the little girl to the ghetto and she became our contact with the forest.

No assignment was too difficult for Sima. Before going out on a mission, she listened carefully to the given instruction; then she would repeat what she was told, trying hard not to miss a single word. Her small pistol was always in the special pocket sewn into her coat. Before starting out, she would always point to it and say, "Don't worry, the Fritzes will not take me alive."

On cold winter nights Sima would sneak out of the ghetto through an opening beneath the barbed wire fence. She returned to the ghetto through the cemetery. There were times when she did not succeed in getting into the ghetto at night. When this happened, she would spend the night, hungry and cold, in some bombed-out building, and remain there throughout the next day. At dusk, when the Jews returned from work, she would stealthily join their column, and together with them enter the ghetto. After the liquidation of the

Minsk ghetto, Sima participated in the combat operations of the partisan detachment.

Sima had an indomitable will to live. She resisted the Nazis, and she survived. Later, when the Germans, now losing the war, were driven out in summer, 1944, Sima marched through Minsk in the front ranks of the partisans. Hers was one of the many forms of resistance to Hitler's persecution. Wherever there was oppression, resistance of some kind emerged. The watchword of the Jewish resistance was: "Live and die with dignity!" And despite the greatest terror, hunger, and privation, Jews upheld that watchword. They did not want simply to vanish silently from the earth.

Acts of resistance were countered by the Nazis with a violence beyond belief. In 1941, a group of Dutch Jews dared to attack German police in Amsterdam. Hannah Arendt reports their punishment:

Four hundred thirty Jews were arrested in reprisal and they were literally tortured to death, first in Buchenwald and then in Mauthausen. For months they died a thousand deaths, and every single one of them would have envied his brethren in Auschwitz and even in Riga and Minsk. There exist many things considerably worse than death, and the SS saw to it that none of them was ever very far from their victims' minds and imagination.

Under such conditions, those who conducted an organized and armed resistance were a minority. That even such a minority existed was a miracle. The right question to ask, Elie Wiesel has said, is not: Why didn't *all* the Jews fight? but How

did so many of them?

Another question to examine is: What was the degree of resistance among non-Jews? Hitler's armies swept over most of Europe with incredible speed. Everyone attributed it to the superior power of the German military forces. The vanquished nations, all of them, had trained and equipped armies. The Jews had nothing. The Nazis killed myriads of people in the parts of Russia they occupied, a territory whose population greatly outnumbered the German troops. How much resistance did Hitler encounter there? Millions of Russian captives were transported to German prisons and labor camps and treated so brutally that 5 million of them died. How many riots or acts of resistance took place among them? Yet no one accuses them of going like sheep to slaughter. No, the vast majority in the prisoner-of-war camps behaved much as did the civilians in the occupied countries. They were inert, passive; they did what they were ordered to do, hoping simply to survive. A minority chose to collaborate with the Nazis. Another minority chose to actively resist.

The purpose here is not to criticize or demean others, only to indicate how hard it is for anyone to resist a ruthless totalitarian power which commands modern weapons and employs elaborate means to crush opposition.

Even so, throughout occupied Europe, when the terrible truth about the Final Solution became clear to some Jews, they urged the others to resist physically. Realists accepted the fact that Hitler meant to annihilate every Jew in Europe, but the majority of Jews could not believe this would happen. Partly because the Germans shrouded their evil work in utter secrecy. Partly because the Germans used many forms of deception to confuse and mislead their victims. And perhaps most importantly, because the very idea of mechanical and systematic mass murder struck most people—everywhere in the world—as utterly inconceivable. It seemed infinitely different from the earlier examples of what came to be known as genocide. It went far beyond the reach of human imagination. As Dr. Louis de Jong, a Dutch historian of the Holocaust, once said, "Our mind, once having grasped the facts, immediately spewed them out as something utterly alien and unnaturally loathsome." A group of Jehovah's Witnesses, who were put in the death camp at Birkenau, by the side of the gas chambers and crematoriums, said later, "One day we would believe our own eyes; the next day we would simply refuse to do so." Another Hollander, Emile Franken, was one of a group in Birkenau which saw the crematorium chimneys smoking day in and day out. But the inmates, "the people themselves," he said, "pretended that the place was a brickyard or a soap factory. This mass delusion lasted for four weeks."

The gas chambers spelled death not only for oneself but for husband, wife, children, grandparents, relatives, friends. How many among the millions who died in them could face that awesome truth? Professor de Jong concludes:

We should be committing an immense historical error, were we to dismiss the many defense mechanisms employed by the victims—not constantly, mind you, but by way of intermittent distress signals—as mere symptoms of blindness or foolishness; rather did these defense mechanisms spring from deep and inherent qualities shared by all mankind: a love of life, a love of family, a fear of death, and an understandable inability to grasp the reality of the greatest crime in the history of mankind, a crime so monstrous . . . that even its perpetrators (the sadists and other perverts among them excepted) were unable to dwell on their activities for too long.

As some Jews became convinced that their people were doomed, the natural question to ask was: How then shall we die? One answer was to frustrate the enemy by not making it easy for him: Do not commit suicide; stay alive as long as you can. The simple act of living on became a form of passive resistance. Many expressed that resistance by carrying on their traditional religious life—praying, singing, studying the Talmud, observing the Holy Days—and their cultural activities in the ghettos. Others hid from the enemy as long as they could. Some bore children as if to say, No matter what you do, the generations will go on.

Other Jews, who began to understand that Nazi terror was a totally different order of life, chose more active ways of responding to it. They felt it was hopeless to rely on legal methods in such a morally criminal system. So people learned how to use bribery, smuggling, forgery, theft, spying, sabotage, violence. They saw these as weapons of defense against a power committed to their destruction. They bribed the enemy; they smuggled food and people; they stole bread and guns; they forged papers—birth and baptismal certificates, residence cards, ration cards, work cards, registration forms, passports. They planted spies in the enemy's ranks; they sabotaged war production; they blew up trains and bridges and buildings; they shot and stabbed and poisoned Hitlerites.

The essential fact is that one can resist in a great many ways, by acting and yes, sometimes, by refusing to act. Armed fighting, for those physically able to undertake it, will usually do the most damage to the enemy. And, of course, there were armed battles. That aspect of Jewish resistance—apart from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—is almost ignored in the earlier accounts of the Holocaust.

Those Who Dared: Rescuers and Rescued: A Teaching Guide for Secondary Schools. Alex Grobman, Ph.D. Martyrs Memorial and Museum of the Holocaust of Jewish Federation. Los Angeles, 1995

THE PROCESS OF COMMEMORATING DEEDS OF HEROISM

by Alex Grobman, Ph.D.

Director, Martyrs Memorial and Museum of the Holocaust

Designating the Righteous

In 1953, the Knesset passed the Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Law creating Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel's national memorial to the six million Jews. As part of its mandate, Yad Vashem established a Commission for the Designation of the Righteous to honor "the high-minded Gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews." The commission is chaired by a member of the Supreme Court of Israel.¹

To be granted the title "Righteous Among the Nations," the rescuer must have:

- a. On his own initiative been actively and directly involved in saving a Jew from being killed or sent to a concentration camp when the Jews were trapped in a country under the control of the Germans or their collaborators during the most dangerous periods of the Holocaust and totally dependent on the goodwill of non-Jews.
- b. Risked everything including his own life, freedom, and safety.
- c. Not received any form of remuneration or reward as a precondition for providing help.
- d. Offered proof from the survivor or incontrovertible archival evidence that the deeds had "caused" a rescue that would not otherwise have occurred and thus went beyond what might be regarded as ordinary assistance.²

Risk is the basic criterion for granting this award—not altruism. Those who aided Jews in countries that were not under Nazi rule or who had diplomatic immunity where there was little or no risk are not eligible for consideration. Jews also cannot be proposed for this honor. The three basic criteria are thus: risk, survival, and evi-

dence.

A candidate is nominated by those who were saved. Notarized applications are sent directly to Yad Vashem through an Israeli embassy or consulate. Data requested by Yad Vashem about the rescuer include the individual's name, approximate age at the time, present address, occupation, and marital status during the war.³

In addition to these questions, the witness-survivor is asked:

- a. To describe briefly his or her life before the start of the rescue story.
- b. How and when the rescuer was met.
- c. Who initiated the rescue.
- d. Dates and places of rescue.
- e. The nature of aid given and if this involved hiding, what were the conditions.
- f. If there were any financial arrangements.
- g. The rescuer's motivations.
- h. The risks involved.
- i. How the cover-up story (presence of the witness) was explained to others.
- j. The relations between the witness and rescuer at the time.
- k. The name and age of others in the rescuer household who helped and the nature of assistance provided by each individual.
- l. The nature of the departure from the rescuer.
- m. The names and addresses of others who helped the rescuer.
- n. The type of incidents that occurred during the stay at the rescuer's home.

Finally, the witness is asked to nominate the individual or individuals in the rescuer's home for the title of "Righteous Among the Nations."⁴

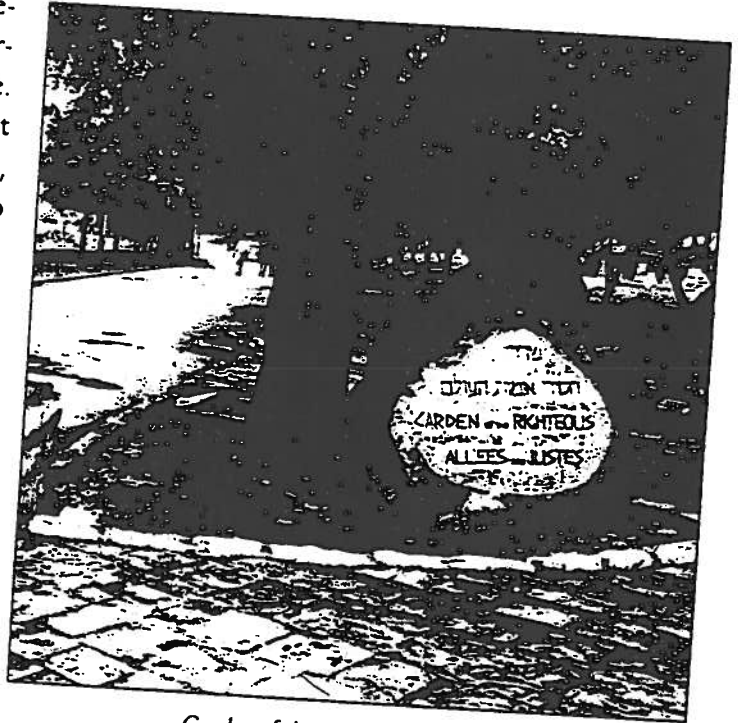
The commission is composed of thirty members. Practically all are survivors who come from various social strata of Israeli society. Some, for example, work in the public sector; others are professionals.⁵ The commission meets between twenty to twenty-five times a year, sometimes as many as thirty. They are divided into three subcommittees with ten in each. At every session they consider at least twelve cases. Each case is meticulously examined: witnesses are interviewed, testimony is heard, and documents are reviewed. Certain cases are fairly straightforward; others are complex. In a situation where there is a dispute, a plenum is convened to resolve the issue. The commission works on precedent and guidelines established over the years. In this way, they avoid codifying the criteria. Common sense plays a major role in all their decisions.

In determining who should be granted this distinction, the commission has had to grapple with many complicated issues. What, for example, do you do in the following cases?

Q: When the rescuer was part of the Nazi machine of destruction?

A: Hans Calmeyer of Holland had the responsibility for separating Jews from non-Jews in cases where the lineage of an individual was unclear. To subvert the system and save Jews, he fabricated their backgrounds whenever he could. "Are you sure your father is really your father," he would ask. "Maybe your mother had an affair."

Whenever doubts about a person's origins were successfully raised, deportations were postponed until further classifications could be made. The Germans were concerned about destroying precious Aryan blood, especially that of the Dutch, who were considered pure-blooded Aryans. Once Calmeyer succeeded in postponing the deportations, he would secure fake documents and affidavits from Jakarta and other cities where records would be difficult to verify. Half of the people on Calmeyer's List were fabricated in this way. By playing for time, Calmeyer succeeded in saving 2,800 Jews. Although part of the Nazi destruction machine, he received an award from Yad Vashem because he subverted the system and saved Jewish lives.⁶



Garden of the Righteous Gentiles
Yad Vashem, Jerusalem
COURTESY ISAAC HARARI, YAD VASHEM

Kurt Gerstein was also a part of the Nazi destruction process, but his case is much more complicated. Gerstein, whose story is recounted in Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*, was a member of the SS from 1941 until his death in July 1945. He briefly studied theology and medicine before becoming a mining engineer. In January 1942, Gerstein was appointed head of the Technical Disinfection Services of the Waffen SS where he was responsible for improving the efficiency of the gas chambers by procuring the highly toxic prussic acid (Zyklon B).

He claimed to have joined the SS "to carry on an active fight and learn more about the aims of the Nazis and their secrets," after being told in 1940 by the Bishop of Stuttgart that

In the end, despite all the risks he took, Gerstein did not save Jews. Moreover, if he committed suicide, he deprived the Allies of an important eyewitness they could have used at the Nuremberg Trials and other war crime tribunals. Given Yad Vashem's strong misgivings about honoring Germans who were part of the destruction process, the outcome of this case is being watched with interest.¹³

Q: When a non-Jew saves a Jew who has voluntarily converted? When the person who saves a Jew is a Gentile but was born a Jew? Is this still a case of a Jew helping a Jew?

A: A Jewish woman who converted to Christianity in 1939, married a non-Jewish Pole in 1943. Since her husband saved her during the war, the woman nominated him for a Yad Vashem award. The request was denied. The commission has ruled that if a non-Jew saves a converted Jew, who has freely severed his or her link to the Jewish people, the individual is ineligible. This also applies to a converted Jew who saves a Jew. If the Jew converted during the war to save himself, however, he can be considered for the award.

The rationale is that although a Jew who converts to another religion is a Jew according to Halacha (Jewish law), the individual no longer wants to be part of the Jewish people. He or she should not then be considered a Jew for the purposes of this award. In this case, when the Pole married this converted Jewish woman, he was marrying a Catholic woman, not a Jewish one. The marriage ceremony even took place in the church.¹⁴

Q: When an antisemite rescues a Jew?

A: Before the war, Zofia Kossak-Szatkowska, a pious Polish Catholic from a prominent family, had distinguished herself as a writer of historical novels. As a nationalist with well-known right-wing sympathies and membership in the Catholic organization Front for a Reborn Poland (F.O.P.), she did not appear to be someone likely to champion the cause of oppressed Jews.

Nevertheless, she actively worked with the underground as a representative of the F.O.P. During the summer of 1942, Zofia wrote "The Protest," an illegal leaflet condemning the "annihilation" of the Jews and the silence of America, England, and the Poles. "This silence," she asserted, "can no longer be tolerated. Whatever the reason for it, it is vile . . . Whoever is silent . . . becomes a partner to the murder. Whoever does not condemn, consents."

Although she demanded that Catholics and Poles raise their voices in protest against these atrocities, she assured them that they need not give up their negative attitude toward Jews. "We continue to deem them political, economic, and ideological enemies of Poland," (but this does) "not release us from the duty of damnation of murder." Zofia's call for the estab-

lishment of an underground organization to save Jews, which she made after the publication of the leaflet, was realized on December 4, 1942, when the Council for Aid to Jews (known by its code name "Zegota") came into existence.

Zofia did not become a member of the Council but she did continue her work with the Jews as well as her other activities in the underground. This led to her capture in 1943 and incarceration in Auschwitz for almost a year. After being discharged, she began saving Jewish children by placing them in convents and other religious institutions.

Zofia received an award from Yad Vashem because of her efforts, despite her antisemitic views. Although Zofia and the small number of other antisemitic rescuers viewed the presence of Jews in Poland as a social and economic threat to their well-being, they did not envision systematic mass murder as the solution. Some were concerned that their antisemitic views might have "indirectly or symbolically" played a role in the extermination of the Jews.

The war stripped the Jews of these negative attributes, revealing a people who, despite their strange and different ways, were part of a common struggle with the Poles against the Nazis. The Jews were now seen as human beings, as the underdogs, who were badly in need of help. To atone for their antisemitic attitudes, these rescuers tried to save Jews.¹⁵

Q: When priests and other clergy baptized Jewish children to raise them as Christians?

A: When Jewish parents entrusted their children to the church for safe-keeping before being deported to the concentration and extermination camps, they expected to get them back at the end of the war. Many baptized children were returned, but large numbers were not. The exact number that were not given back to the Jewish people will never be known. Girls were the most difficult to find.

Children were baptized because conversion significantly lessened the danger of their being discovered¹⁶ by the Nazis and their collaborators. Once a child became immersed in Catholicism, the possibility that the individual's true origins would be revealed were greatly diminished. Catholicism also offered a sense of security and comfort to the children. After the war, many children had difficulty giving up Catholicism and returning to Judaism.¹⁷

Nuns and priests who sheltered Jewish children were given awards from Yad Vashem even if they converted their charges and were reluctant to return them after the war. For the most part, they had acted on their own, since the Vatican and the Polish clergy had not articulated a clear-cut policy about the systematic mass murder of the Jewish people.

Q: When money was paid. Was it acceptable to share in household expenses?

A: As long as sharing in the household expenses was not a precondition for sheltering Jews, it was permissible to do so. This was especially true if the Pole had little or no money, and the Jew had the means to help. Securing food took a lot of ingenuity and daring during wartime when food was quite scarce. ¹⁸

Q: When a rescuer shelters a Jew for a year and then expels him?

A: The circumstances of how the Jew left the protection of his rescuer is the main issue in this case. If the rescuer asked the Jew to leave without any means of finding another haven, then he is ineligible. If the rescuer could not shelter him anymore but secured another place of refuge for the Jew, then the non-Jew is eligible. ¹⁹

Q: When collaborators—Ukrainians, French, Italians—saved Jews for political reasons?

A: There are several types of individuals who fit this category, including:

- a. Those who were pro-German because they believed that Nazi ideology would further the national aspirations of their country.
- b. Those who participated in a paramilitary unit.
- c. Those who advocated Nazi victory and called upon their fellow countrymen for their help to ensure this triumph.

If these people saved Jews they could, in rare instances, be eligible for consideration.

Q: What about public figures who saved Jews but called for close cooperation with the Nazis?

A: The problem of awarding the Righteous title to a person in this category can be seen in the case of Metropolitan Andreas Sheptitsky of Lvov, who had hidden about 150 Jews in monasteries in eastern Galicia. He did not receive an award from Yad Vashem despite his having rescued Jews. The reason? According to Mordechai Paldiel, "His advocacy of a German victory, his call for Ukrainians to join Nazi units, and his silence at the wholesale pogroms of Jews by his own countrymen, taking place right under his own window, disqualified him in the eyes of Yad Vashem to bear the Righteous title. For a man in his position (head of an important church in Ukraine), to remain silent at the killings of Jews, in which his own people participated, and at the same time, to call for a Nazi victory, morally canceled out his involvement in saving a handful of Jews."

There were also individuals who belonged to the fascist movements, such as the "Milice Française" in France and the Iron Cross in Hungary, who saved Jews. People who joined these groups would have "great difficulty" in being awarded the Righteous title, "since such units participated in wholesale criminal activities, and it would have to be proved that candidates for the Righteous title did not smear their hands with innocent blood."

Those who donned the uniform of the SS in Latvia and Ukraine to pacify the countryside but saved a Jew or even several Jews cannot be considered. Saving some Jews while participating in the mass destruction of hundreds or thousands of others does not absolve them of their crimes.

Guards at a concentration or extermination camp are in the same category, even if they helped save a few Jewish lives. They did not have to serve at the camp since they could have been excused from their positions without retribution.²⁰

Q: When individuals were part of the German civil service administration?

A: When Hitler and Stalin partitioned Poland in 1939, Zloczow, a town in Galicia, became part of the Soviet Union. On July 1, 1941, more than 3,000 of Zloczow's 16,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis after they had invaded Russia. The rest were herded into a ghetto.

In December 1941, Josef Meyer, a German civil servant, approached Solomon Altmann, a lawyer who now managed a bakery, to offer his help to the Jewish community. As director of the district department of agriculture and food procurement, Meyer was able to double the number of people listed as employed by his department so that he could increase the food allocation to the ghetto. He also established a free kitchen there. To justify the large quantities of food being consumed, Meyer kept books showing that the food had been sent to army units and business firms, all of which were fictitious.

To increase the number of Jews legitimately working and thus spare them from being sent to the gas chambers, Meyer established a candy factory. When he heard that 1,000 Jewish inmates at a nearby labor camp were to be killed unless the typhus epidemic in the camp decreased significantly, he smuggled in soap and medicine which saved them.

In January 1943, the Gestapo arrested Meyer but released him for lack of evidence after three days of intensive interrogation. Just before the Germans liquidated the Zloczow ghetto in April 1943, Meyer arranged with the Strassler brothers, who operated the candy factory, to dig a tunnel large enough to hide thirty people. For almost a year, the Strassler group lived in the tunnel, which was 20 feet below the market square. The Germans suspected that Jews were hiding in the area, but the Jews were so far below ground that they could not be

detected by the German dogs. Cooking smoke was vented through one of the sewers.

Meyer provided the food and whatever else they required to sustain themselves. At the same time, Meyer arranged for a Pole to hide Altmann, his son, and Altmann's father in a bunker behind a barn. Mrs. Altmann went to Warsaw, where friends took care of her after Meyer secured Aryan identity papers for her and then drove her to Lvóv and put her on the train. Meyer also found refuge for Altman's handyman Josef and Josef's wife.

When the Red Army liberated the town in July 1944, all the Jews that Meyer had protected were still alive, although by then he had been evacuated westward by the German army. In 1965, Meyer visited Israel where he was honored by Yad Vashem. Although he had been part of the German civil service, he circumvented the rules and, at enormous risk to himself, had saved Jewish lives. In his testimony to Yad Vashem, Solomon Altmann noted: "The fact that he saved our lives is certainly important. But the fact that Herr Meyer kept alive our belief in man is even more important."²¹

Q: When a rescuer was a member of the German military?

A: The highest ranking German officer to receive recognition by Yad Vashem is Major Max Liedtke. On July 26, 1942, Liedtke, a 46-year-old commander of the local garrison in Przemysl, Poland, ordered his troops to shoot any member of the SS who tried to deport the 80 Jews that he was protecting at his headquarters. A violent confrontation at a bridge over the San River was averted when the SS decided not to force the issue.

Liedtke was transferred to the Russian front for his action but without being stripped of his rank. He was captured and later died in a camp in the Urals.²²

Q: When a person saved a Jew at the end of the war; for example, April 25, 1945?

A: If the rescue took place in an area still under Nazi control and involved real risk, the rescuer would most probably receive an award. If the rescuer had a questionable wartime record, however, and saved a Jew to avoid answering for his actions or he feared prosecution, he may be ineligible for consideration.²³

Q: When a couple who save a Jewish child refuse to give up the child and the only the way to get the child back is by kidnapping?

A: Some of those who saved Jewish children became so emotionally attached to their charges that they would not willingly give them back to the parents or if the parents had died, to representatives of the Jewish community. Kidnapping became the only available

option to retrieve the children and ensure that they be raised as Jews.

Even under these circumstances, Yad Vashem recognized them for having risked their lives to save Jews. Some of these couples might have taken the children because they were childless. Motivation is not a concern, because these people did not ask to be compensated. That they had difficulty in returning the children demonstrated the strong attachments that had developed between child and adoptive parents.²⁴

The decision by Yad Vashem to honor only rescuers who saved Jews has meant that some people who deserve special recognition are ineligible to receive this award. An example will illustrate the problem.

A girl was born to a Jewish father and a Christian mother in the early 1930s and raised in the Christian faith. According to Jewish law, the child was Christian because the religion of a child is determined by the religion of the mother. Although Jewish law regarded her as a Christian, the Nazis considered her a Jew because one of her parents was Jewish.

The father fled Munich in 1939 with the hope of finding a haven for his family. The family ultimately found refuge in a village where they were protected for two years by the mayor. After the war, the family sent an application to Yad Vashem on behalf of the mayor. The application was turned down because the girl he had saved was technically not Jewish.²⁵

Perhaps one solution might be to have a separate award for those who saved a non-Jew.

The Ceremony

Rescuers are honored at a public ceremony at Yad Vashem. Until Yad Vashem ran out of space, a carob tree was planted by the rescuer along the Avenue of the Righteous, which leads to the museum. The individual's name and nationality were inscribed on a plaque at its base. Some have wrongly ascribed religious significance to this choice because the bean pods of the tree sustained John the Baptist during his wanderings in the wilderness (Mark 1:6).²⁶ Yad Vashem chose the carob tree because the tree is a perennial, is sturdy and strong, but not dominating like the cypress tree, which is associated with pride.²⁷

Now the rescuer's name is placed on the Wall of Honor. The ceremony begins at Ohel Yizkor (the Hall of Remembrance) where a cantor recites the *Kel Maleh Rachamim* (God who is merciful) and the Mourner's Kaddish (prayer that glorifies God's name), and then the rescuer rekindles the eternal flame. The main prayer is said in the rescuer's native language. A wreath is then placed on the vault containing ashes of the Holocaust victims.

The ceremony continues at the Wall of Honor where the rescuer's name is unveiled. If the

rescuer has not yet received a medal that bears his name and a certificate of honor from an Israeli embassy abroad, the presentation is made at this point. They are inscribed with the Talmudic adage that states, "He who saves one life is considered as having saved the whole universe." The rescuer is then invited to say a few words; those who were saved then speak.

As the survivors enter their twilight years, the number of applications have increased dramatically. The first nomination from the former Soviet Union arrived in 1989. A full-time person fluent in Russian has been added to the staff to deal with the very significant requests from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The program will come to an end within the next decade.

Not everyone awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations" is willing to accept this honor. A number refuse to acknowledge that they are heroes. Some disapprove of Israeli government policies. Those in Eastern Europe who admit to having saved Jews run the risk of being ostracized or worse. In the immediate post-war period, in Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania some rescuers have been murdered.²⁸

What type of individual would risk his or her life to save a Jew? Nechama Tec, a professor of sociology who survived the Holocaust by passing as a Christian with the help of Christian Poles, has isolated several characteristics which shed light on this question.

Characteristics of rescuers included:

- a. A high level of individuality, independence, and self-reliance that caused them "to pursue personal goals regardless of how these goals" were perceived by others.
- b. A commitment and involvement in helping the needy that had preceded the war.
- c. A belief that their rescue activities were not heroic or extraordinary but part of their duty.
- d. An "unplanned and gradual beginning of rescue at times involving a sudden, even impulsive move."
- e. A "universalistic perception of the needy" that "overshadowed all other attributes except their dependence on aid."²⁹

Pierre Sauvage, the noted film maker, asserts that religious belief was another significant characteristic of rescuers that has not been adequately addressed. His award-winning documentary, *Weapons of the Spirit*, relates the story of the Protestant village of Le Chambon in southern France that hid 5,000 Jews, including he and his family, during the Nazi occupation. As a pioneer in the field of

THE PROCESS OF COMMEMORATING DEEDS OF HEROISM

the Righteous, he has interviewed many rescuers. He is convinced that religion has played a far greater role in motivating them than is generally recognized. If true, as I believe it is, this issue needs to be studied further.

Celestine Loen, a Hungarian housewife who saved 32 Jews in the basement of her Budapest apartment house, is a rescuer who fits this profile. A native of Yugoslavia, she and her family fled to Budapest after the Nazis annexed part of their native land in 1942. The war had radically changed her upper-class lifestyle. She no longer enjoyed the services of a chauffeur and two housekeepers nor took luxurious vacations. Rather than dwell on her own losses, she became actively involved in saving Jewish lives.

When she heard stories about the extermination camps and saw the Jewish ghetto in Budapest being established during the latter part of 1944, she regularly began visiting the ghetto to bring her friends news about the outside world and to smuggle them food and radios. On one visit, a guard questioned her reason for entering the ghetto. "Those damn Jews owe me money, and I'm here to collect!" she declared. The guard let her pass.

Jews who were able to escape the ghetto found refuge in the basement of Loen's apartment building. From the middle of 1944 through early 1945, she sheltered 32 Jews. Through contacts developed with farmers, she secured enough food—including fresh vegetables, flour, and sometimes fat geese—to feed her family and her charges. A local baker was bribed to bake large quantities of bread.

Sympathetic neighbors and the janitor never complained about the danger involved in hiding Jews in the building. Inexplicably, not all neighbors were aware that their apartment building had become a haven, perhaps because there were never more than eleven Jews in hiding at one time.

During air raids, when the building residents would flee to the basement, the Jews sought refuge in cars parked across the street from the building. When one neighbor became suspicious of one of the Jews, Loen had the suspect dressed up and introduced as a Presbyterian minister.

She also had to hide her activities from some members of her own family who were Nazi sympathizers. But others were more helpful. The family had lost a number of aunts, uncles, and cousins during the war, including Loen's son, who was killed while fighting with the Resistance in Yugoslavia.



Mrs. Celestine Loen

Soviet troops liberated Budapest in January 1945 and shortly thereafter the Jews left the Loens. Some remained in contact with her after the war. In 1947, she emigrated to the United States. Although she never discussed her wartime rescue activities, a number of Jews informed Yad Vashem of her exploits. In May 1966, members of the Jewish Hungarian Club brought her to Israel to thank her personally for saving their lives. She also received a medal and certificate of honor from Yad Vashem. In 1985, a tree bearing her name was planted along the Avenue of the Righteous. She died at the age of 94 in Hacienda Heights, California, not knowing why the Jewish community had gone to such lengths to thank her for something she felt was simply her responsibility as a human being.³⁰


For all our valiant efforts to find the rescuers, their names are "largely unrecorded and their good deeds remain anonymous and unrewarded, except in the emotions of those they saved" observed Sybil Milton, a Holocaust historian.³¹ Some Jews and their rescuers were killed during the war; others died later, leaving no one to tell their stories. Still others, rescued and rescuers, were unable to locate each other after so many years of separation.

Although we will never know the precise number of rescuers who saved Jews, we can learn much from the testimonies of those we have documented. As Sholem Asch, the noted Jewish writer, acknowledged: "It is of the highest importance not only to record and recount, both for ourselves and for the future, the evidences of human degradation, but side by side with them to set forth the evidences of human elevation and nobility. Let the epic of heroic deeds of love, as opposed by those of hatred, of rescue as opposed to destruction, bear equal witness to unborn generations."³²

ENDNOTES

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- ² Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous, Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Hoboken: New Jersey, KTAV Publishing House, 1993), p.5.
- ³ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ⁴ Yad Vashem Questionnaire for Righteous Among The Nations. Yad Vashem, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem.
- ⁵ Paldiel, op. cit., p.5.
- ⁶ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ⁷ Saul Friedlander, *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), p.74.
- ⁸ Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia To The Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) pp. 86-110.
- ⁹ Saul Friedlander, op.cit. pp. 126, 128-129.

- ¹⁰ Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's Final Solution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980).
- ¹¹ Saul Friedlander, *op.cit.* p. 220.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
- ¹³ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced The Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 104-112; and Joseph Kermish, "The Activities of the Council for Aid to Jews (Zegota) in Occupied Poland," in *Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust*, *op.cit.*, pp. 367-398.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147. See also Saul Friedlander, *When Memory Comes*, translated from the French by Helen Lane (New York: Avon Books, 1980).
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.
- ¹⁸ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.* See also Paldiel, *op.cit.*, pp. 163-165.
- ²² *Martyrdom and Resistance*. January-February, 1994, p.9. See also, Eric Silver, *The Book of the Just* (New York: Grove Press, 1992), pp. 137-147.
- ²³ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Peter Hellman, *Avenue of the Righteous: Portraits in Uncommon Courage of Christians and the Jews They Saved from Hitler* (New York: Atheneum, 1980), p. ix.
- ²⁷ Interview with Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, September 18, 1994.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ Nechama Tec, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
- ³⁰ *Los Angeles Times* and an interview with Masha Loen, her daughter-in-law, September 20, 1994.
- ³¹ Sybil Milton, "The Righteous Who Helped Jews" in *Genocide: Critical Issues of the Holocaust*. Alex Grobman and Daniel Landes, eds. p. 282.
- ³² Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), pp. 13-14.



**The Jewish Student Online
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Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara



In the course of human existence, many people are tested. Only a few soar as eagles and achieve greatness by simple acts of kindness, thoughtfulness and humanity. This is the story of a man and his wife who, when confronted with evil, obeyed the kindness of their hearts and conscience in defiance of the orders of an indifferent government. These people were Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara who, at the beginning of World War II, by an ultimate act of altruism and self-sacrifice, risked their careers, their livelihood and their future to save the lives of more than 6,000 Jews. This selfless act resulted in the second largest number of Jews rescued from the Nazis.

The Compassion of Consul-General Sempo Sugihara

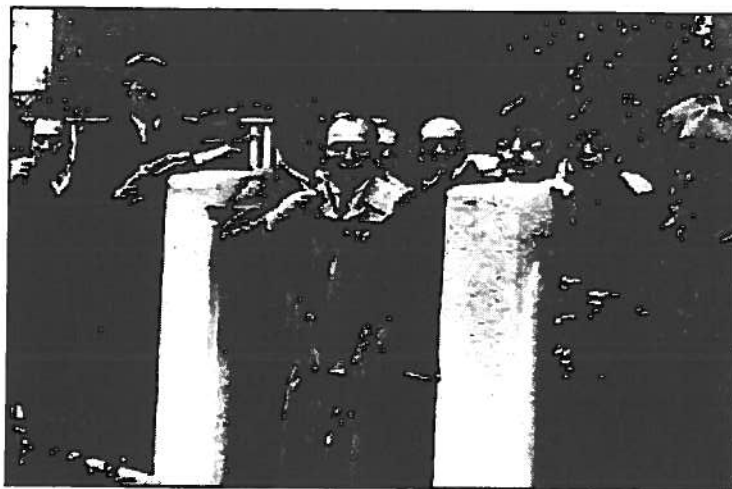
In March 1939, Japanese Consul-General Chiune Sugihara was sent to Kaunas to open a consulate service. Kaunas was the temporary capital of Lithuania at the time and was strategically situated between Germany and the Soviet Union. After Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Chiune Sugihara had barely settled down in his new post when Nazi armies invaded Poland and a wave

of Jewish refugees streamed into Lithuania. They brought with them chilling tales of German atrocities against the Jewish population. They escaped from Poland without possessions or money, and the local Jewish population did their utmost to help with money, clothing and shelter.

Before the war, the population of Kaunas consisted of 120,000 inhabitants, one fourth of which were Jews. Lithuania, at the time, had been an enclave of peace and prosperity for Jews. Most Lithuanian Jews did not fully realize or believe the extent of the Nazi Holocaust that was being perpetrated against the Jews in Poland. The Jewish refugees tried to explain that they were being murdered by the tens of thousands. No one could quite believe them. The Lithuanian Jews continued living normal lives. Things began to change for the very worst on June 15, 1940, when the Soviets invaded Lithuania. It was now too late for the Lithuanian Jews to leave for the East. Ironically, the Soviets would allow Polish Jews to continue to emigrate out of Lithuania through the Soviet Union if they could obtain certain travel documents.

By 1940, most of Western Europe had been conquered by the Nazis, with Britain standing alone. The rest of the free world, with very few exceptions, barred the immigration of Jewish refugees from Poland or anywhere in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Against this terrible backdrop, the Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara suddenly became the linchpin in a desperate plan for survival. The fate of thousands of families depended on his humanity. The Germans were rapidly advancing east. In July 1940, the Soviet authorities instructed all foreign embassies to leave Kaunas. Almost all left immediately, but Chiune Sugihara requested and received a 20-day extension.



Jewish refugees at the gate, July 1940. Thousands of Jews lined up in front of the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania, hoping to receive transit visas allowing them to escape to the Far East and to America or Palestine

Except for Mr. Jan Zwartendijk, the acting Dutch consul, Chiune Sugihara was now the only foreign consul left in Lithuania's capital city. They had much work to do.

The Dutch Connection

Now into summer, time was running out for the refugees. Hitler rapidly tightened his net around Eastern Europe. It was then that some of the Polish refugees came up with a plan that offered one last chance for freedom. They discovered that two Dutch colonial islands, Curacao and Dutch Guiana, (now known as Suriname) situated in the Caribbean, did not require formal entrance visas. Furthermore, the honorary Dutch consul, Jan Zwartendijk, told them he had gotten permission to stamp their passports with entrance permits.

There remained one major obstacle. To get to these islands, the refugees needed to pass through the Soviet Union. The Soviet consul, who was sympathetic to the plight of the refugees, agreed to let them pass on one condition: In addition to the Dutch entrance permit, they would also have to obtain a transit visa from the Japanese, as they would have to pass through Japan on their way to the Dutch islands.

Sugihara's Choice

On a summer morning in late July 1940, Consul Sempo Sugihara and his family awakened to a crowd of Polish Jewish refugees gathered outside the consulate. Desperate to flee the approaching Nazis, the refugees knew that their only path lay to the east. If Consul Sugihara would grant them Japanese transit visas, they could obtain Soviet exit visas and race to possible freedom. Sempo Sugihara was moved by their plight, but he did not have the authority to issue hundreds of visas without permission from the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo.

Permission Denied

Chiune Sugihara wired his government three times for permission to issue visas to the Jewish refugees. Three times he was denied. The Japanese Consul in Tokyo wired:

CONCERNING TRANSIT VISAS REQUESTED PREVIOUSLY STOP
ADVISE ABSOLUTELY NOT TO BE ISSUED ANY TRAVELER
NOT HOLDING FIRM END VISA WITH GUARANTEED
DEPARTURE EX JAPAN STOP NO EXCEPTIONS STOP NO
FURTHER INQUIRIES EXPECTED STOP

(SIGNED) K TANAKA FOREIGN MINISTRY TOKYO

Visas For Life

After repeatedly receiving negative responses from Tokyo, the Consul discussed the situation with his wife and children. Sugihara had a difficult decision to make. He was a man who was brought up in the strict and traditional discipline of the Japanese. He was a career diplomat, who suddenly had to make a very difficult choice. On one hand, he was bound by the traditional obedience he had been taught all his life. On the other hand, he was a samurai who had been told to help those who were in need. He knew that if he defied the orders of his superiors, he might be fired and disgraced, and would probably never work for the Japanese government again. This would result in extreme financial hardship for his family in the future.

Chiune and his wife Yukiko even feared for their lives and the lives of their children, but in the end, could only follow their consciences. The visas would be signed.



For 29 days, from July 31 to August 28, 1940, Mr. and Mrs. Sugihara sat for endless hours writing and signing visas by hand. Hour after hour, day after day, for these three weeks, they wrote and signed visas. They wrote over 300 visas a day, which would normally be one month's worth of work for the consul. Yukiko also helped him register these visas. At the end of the day, she would massage his fatigued hands. He did not even stop to eat. His wife supplied him with sandwiches. Sugihara chose not to lose a minute because people were standing in line in front of his consulate day and night for these visas. When some began climbing the compound wall, he came out to calm them down and assure them that he would do his best to help them all. Hundreds of applicants became thousands as he worked to grant as many visas as possible before being forced to close the consulate and leave Lithuania. Consul Sugihara continued issuing documents from his train window until the moment the train departed Kovno for Berlin on September 1, 1940. And as the train pulled out of the station, Sugihara gave the consul visa stamp to a refugee who was able use it to save even more Jews.

After receiving their visas, the refugees lost no time in getting on trains that took them to Moscow, and then by trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok. From there, most of them continued to Kobe, Japan. They were allowed to stay in Kobe for several months, and were then sent to Shanghai, China. Thousands of Polish Jews with Sugihara visas survived in safety under the benign protection of the Japanese government in Shanghai. As many as six

thousand refugees made their way to Japan, China and other countries in the following months. They had escaped the Holocaust. Through a strange twist of history, they owed their lives to a Japanese man and his family. They had become **Sugihara Survivors**.

Despite his disobedience, his government found Sugihara's vast skills useful for the remainder of the war. But in 1945, the Japanese government unceremoniously dismissed Chiune Sugihara from the diplomatic service. His career as a diplomat was shattered. He had to start his life over. Once a rising star in the Japanese foreign service, Chiune Sugihara could at first only find work as a part-time translator and interpreter. For the last two decades of his life, he worked as a manager for an export company with business in Moscow. This was his fate because he dared to save thousands of human beings from certain death.

The Miracle of Chanukah 1939

The makings of a hero are many and complex, but Sugihara's fateful decision to risk his career may have been influenced by a simple act of kindness from an 11-year-old boy. He lived with his family in Lithuania, and his name was Zalke Jenkins (Solly Ganor).

Solly Ganor was the son of a menshevik refugee from the Russian revolution in the early 1920s. After the Russian revolution the family moved to Kaunas, Lithuania. The family prospered for years before World War II in textile import and export. Young Solly Ganor, concerned about Polish Jews entering Kaunas, gave most of his allowance and savings to the Jewish refugee boards. Having given away all of his money, he went to his aunt Annushka's gourmet food shop in Kaunas. He went there to borrow a Lithuania lit (Lithuanian dollar) to see the latest Laurel and Hardy movie. In his aunt's store he met Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara. Consul Sugihara overheard the conversation and gave young Solly two shiny lit. Impulsively, the young boy invited the Consul with the kind eyes to his family celebration of the first night of Chanukah 1939.

The surprised and delighted Consul gratefully accepted the young boy's offer, and he and his wife Yukiko attended their first Jewish Chanukah celebration.

Mr. Sugihara commented on the closeness of the Jewish families and how it reminded him of his family, and of similar Japanese festivals. Fifty-four years later, Mrs. Sugihara remembers with delight the cakes and cookies and desserts offered to them during this Jewish festival of lights.

Solly Ganor and his father were soon friends with the Consul-General and they conversed in Russian. Later Solly Ganor and his father witnessed Consul Sugihara in his office calling the Russian officials to get permission to issue visas across the Russian borders. Solly Ganor and his father later received Sugihara visas but were unable to use them because they were Soviet citizens.

Most of the Ganor family were murdered in the Holocaust. Solly's sister Fanny and Aunt Anushka survived the war. Aunt Anushka returned to Lithuania and died in 1969. Fanny married Sam Skutelsky from Riga and eventually settled in the United States. Their son Robert, Solly's only living

nephew, now lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Solly and his father spent over two years in the Kaunas ghetto before being deported to the Landsberg-Kaufering outer camps of Dachau in late 1944. They survived the war and moved to Israel. The older Ganor died peacefully in Tel Aviv in 1966.

Ironically, in May 1945, Solly Ganor was liberated by Japanese American soldiers of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, men who had been interned in their own country.

To Solly, the Japanese face has come to symbolize kindness and liberation.

Who Was Chiune Sugihara?

For the last half century people have asked, "Who was Chiune Sugihara?"

They have also asked, "Why did he risk his career, his family fortune, and the lives of his family to issue visas to Jewish refugees in Lithuania?" These are not easy questions to answer, and there may be no single set of answers that will satisfy our curiosity or inquiry.

Chiune (Sempo) Sugihara always did things his own way. He was born on January 1, 1900. He graduated from high school with top marks and his father insisted that he become a medical doctor. But Chiune's dream was to study literature and live abroad. Sugihara attended Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University to study English. He paid for his own education with part-time work as a longshoreman and tutor.

One day he saw an item in the classified ads. The Foreign Ministry was seeking people who wished to study abroad and might be interested in a diplomatic career. He passed the difficult entrance exam and was sent to the Japanese language institute in Harbin, China. He studied Russian and graduated with honors. He also converted to Greek Orthodox Christianity. The cosmopolitan nature of Harbin, China opened his eyes to how diverse and interesting the world was.

He then served with the Japanese-controlled government in Manchuria, in northeastern China. He was later promoted to Vice Minister of the Foreign Affairs Department. He was soon in line to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Manchuria.

While in Manchuria he negotiated the purchase of the Russian-owned Manchurian railroad system by the Japanese. This saved the Japanese government millions of dollars, and infuriated the Russians.

Sugihara was disturbed by his government's policy and the cruel treatment of the Chinese by the Japanese government. He resigned his post in protest in 1934.

In 1938 Sugihara was posted to the Japanese diplomatic office in Helsinki, Finland. With World War II looming on the horizon, the Japanese government sent Sugihara to Lithuania to open a one-man consulate in 1939. There he would report on Soviet and German war plans. Six months

later, war broke out and the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania. The Soviets ordered all consulates to be closed. It was in this context that Sugihara was confronted with the requests of thousands of Polish Jews fleeing German-occupied Poland.

Sugihara, the Man

Sugihara's personal history and temperament may contain the key to why he defied his government's orders and issued the visas. Sugihara favored his mother's personality. He thought of himself as kind and nurturing and artistic. He was interested in foreign ideas, religion, philosophy and language. He wanted to travel the world and see everything there was, and experience the world. He had a strong sense of the value of all human life. His language skills show that he was always interested in learning more about other peoples.

Sugihara was a humble and understated man. He was self-sacrificing, self-effacing and had a very good sense of humor. Yukiko, his wife, said he found it very difficult to discipline the children when they misbehaved. He never lost his temper.

Sugihara was also raised in the strict Japanese code of ethics of a turn-of-the-century samurai family. The cardinal virtues of this society were *oya koko* (love of the family), *kodomo no tamene* (for the sake of the children), having *gidi* and *on* (duty and responsibility, or obligation to repay a debt), *gaman* (withholding of emotions on the surface), *gambate* (internal strength and resourcefulness), and *haji no kakete* (don't bring shame on the family). These virtues were strongly inculcated by Chiune's middle-class rural samurai family.

It took enormous courage for Sugihara to defy the order of his father to become a doctor, and instead follow his own academic path. It took courage to leave Japan and study overseas. It took a very modern liberal Japanese man to marry a Caucasian woman (his first wife; Yukiko was his second wife) and convert to Christianity. It took even more courage to openly oppose the Japanese military policies of expansion in the 1930s.

Thus Sempo Sugihara was no ordinary Japanese man and may have been no ordinary man. At the time that he and his wife Yukiko thought of the plight of the Jewish refugees, he was haunted by the words of an old samurai maxim: "Even a hunter cannot kill a bird which flies to him for refuge."

A Final Tribute: Righteous Among the Nations

Today, more than 50 years after those 29 fateful days in July and August of 1940, there may be more than 40,000 who owe their lives to Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara. Two generations have come after the original Sugihara survivors, all owing their existence to one modest man and his family. After the war, Mr. Sugihara never mentioned or spoke to anyone about his extraordinary deeds. It was not until 1969 that Sugihara was found by a man he had helped save, Mr. Yehoshua Nishri. Soon, hundreds of others whom he had saved came forward and testified to the Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial) in Israel about his life saving acts of courage. After gathering testimonies from all over the world, Yad Vashem realized the enormity of this man's self-sacrifice in saving Jews. And so it came to pass

that in 1985 he received Israel's highest honor. He was recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" by the Yad Vashem Martyrs Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem.

By then a old man near death, he was too ill to travel to Israel. His wife and son received the honor on his behalf. Further, a tree was planted in his name at Yad Vashem, and a park in Jerusalem was named in his honor.

Forty-five years after he signed the visas, Chiune was asked why he did it. He liked to give two reasons: "They were human beings and they needed help," he said. "I'm glad I found the strength to make the decision to give it to them." Sugihara was a religious man and believed in a universal God of all people. He was fond of saying, "I may have to disobey my government, but if I don't I would be disobeying God."

Consul Chiune Sugihara, age 86, died on July 31, 1986. Mrs. Yukiko Sugihara had her 83nd birthday on December 17, 1996. She now lives in Kamakura City, Japan.

Source: Copyright © 1995-1997 Ron Greene. VISAS FOR LIFE: The Remarkable Story of Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara. Photographs Copyright © 1995-1996 Eric Saul and the Sugihara Family Trust. All Rights Reserved. Mrs. Sugihara's autobiography, written in 1990, has now been translated into English by her oldest son, Hiroki. The book is available through Mr. Hiroki Sugihara at 2056 Bush Street, #1, San Francisco, CA 94115, USA. Tel.(415) 776-6745 Fax. (415) 776-6775.

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Raoul Wallenberg

(1912 - ?)



Raoul Wallenberg belongs--or belonged--to one of the most famous families in Sweden, the large Wallenberg family. It is a family that has contributed to Sweden bankers, diplomats and politicians during several generations. Raoul's father, Raoul Oscar Wallenberg, was an officer in the navy, and cousin to Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg, two of Sweden's most famous bankers and industrialists. Raoul was born August 4, 1912, three months after his father's death. His mother, Maj Wising Wallenberg, remarried Fredrik von Dardel in 1918.

Raoul's grandfather, Gustav Wallenberg, took care of Raoul's education. The plan was for him to continue the family tradition and become a banker, but he was more interested in architecture and trade.

In 1930, Raoul Wallenberg graduated with top grades in Russian and drawing. After his army service he traveled to the USA in 1931 to study architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Wallenberg spent a lot of time studying, and he graduated in 3 1/2 years. Most of his classes were held in what is now Lorch Hall. Wallenberg graduated with honors and won a medal that went to the person with the most impressive academic record. Wallenberg's letters reveal that he enjoyed his studies. He wrote to his grandfather, "When I now look back upon the last school year, I find I have had a completely wonderful time." In 1935, he received his bachelor degree of Science in Architecture and returned to Sweden. But the market for architects was small in Sweden, so his grandfather sent him to Cape Town, South Africa, where he practiced at a Swedish firm selling building materials. After six months, his grandfather arranged a new job for him at a Dutch bank office in Haifa, Palestine (now Israel).

It was in Palestine he first met Jews that had escaped Hitler's Germany. Their stories of the Nazi persecutions affected him deeply. Perhaps because he had a very humane attitude to life and because he owned a drop of Jewish blood (Raoul's grandmother's grandfather was a Jew by the name of Benedicks whom arrived to Sweden by the end of the 18th century). After his return from Haifa in 1936, Raoul Wallenberg resumed his old interest for business.

Through Jacob Wallenberg's good contacts in the business world, Raoul was eventually brought together with Koloman Lauer, a Hungarian Jew. He was a director of a Swedish based import and export company specializing in food and delicacies.

Thanks to Raoul Wallenberg's excellent language skills, and thanks to his freedom of movement in Europe, he was a perfect business partner for Lauer. Within eight months, Raoul Wallenberg was a joint owner and international director of the Mid-European Trading Company.

Through his trips in Nazi-occupied France and in Germany itself, Raoul quickly learned how the German bureaucracy functioned. He had also made several trips to Hungary and Budapest, where he visited Lauer's family. Hungary was still a relatively safe place in a hostile surrounding.

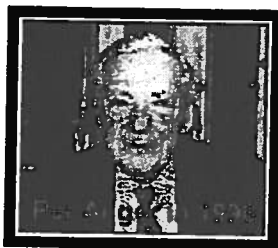
During the spring of 1944 the world had awoken and realized what Hitler's "final solution to the Jewish problem" meant. In May 1944 the first authentic eye witness report reached the western world of what happened in the extermination camp Auschwitz. It came from two Jews who managed to escape the German gas chambers.

Hitler's plans for the extermination of the Jews of Europe became known. In Hungary, which had joined Germany in the war against the Soviet Union in 1941, there still lived an estimated 700,000 Jews at the beginning of 1944.

When the Germans lost the battle of Stalingrad 1943, Hungary wanted to follow Italy's example and demand a separate peace. Hitler then called the Hungarian head of state, Miklós Horthy, and demanded continued solidarity with Germany. When Horthy refused to meet the demands, Hitler invaded Hungary on March 19, 1944. Soon after that the deportations of Jews started. The destination was Auschwitz-Birkenau in southern Poland, and a certain death.

The Germans started deporting the Jews from the country side, but the Jewish citizens of Budapest knew that their hour of fate was also soon to come. In their desperation they sought help from the embassies of the neutral countries, where provisional passes were issued for Jews with special connections to these countries.

The Swedish legation in Budapest succeeded in negotiating with the Germans that the bearers of these protective passes would be treated as Swedish citizens and exempt from wearing the yellow Star of David on their chest. It was Per Anger, a young diplomat at the legation in Budapest, who initiated the first of these Swedish protective passes. (In 1982, Per Anger was also awarded the honor of "righteous among the nations" by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for his heroic actions to save Jews during the war.)



In a short period of time the Swedish legation issued 700 passes, a drop in the ocean compared to the enormous number of Jews being threatened. The legation requested immediate staff reinforcements from the foreign department in Stockholm.

In 1944, the USA established The War Refugee Board (WRB), an organization with the purpose of saving Jews from Nazi persecution. The WRB soon realized that serious attempts were being made from the Swedish side to rescue the Jewish population in Hungary. The WRB's representative in Stockholm called a committee with prominent Swedish Jews to discuss suitable persons to lead a mission in Budapest for an extensive rescue operation. Among the participants was Raoul Wallenberg's business partner Koloman Lauer, chosen as an expert on Hungary.

The first choice was Folke Bernadotte, chairman of the Swedish Red Cross and relative to the Swedish king. After Bernadotte was disapproved by the Hungarian government, Koloman Lauer suggested that his business partner Raoul Wallenberg should be asked. Lauer emphasized that Wallenberg had made many trips to Hungary while working for their joint company. Raoul was considered too young and seemed inexperienced, but Lauer was persistent. Raoul was the right man according to him--a quick thinker, energetic, brave and compassionate. And he had a famous name.

Soon everybody had approved Wallenberg. At the end of June 1944 he was appointed first secretary at the Swedish legation in Budapest with the mission to start a rescue operation for the Jews. Raoul was very excited to go to Hungary, but first he wrote a memo to the Swedish foreign department. He was determined not to get caught in the protocol and paperwork bureaucracy of diplomacy. He demanded full authorization to deal with whom he wanted without having to contact the ambassador first. He also wanted to have the right to send diplomatic couriers beyond the usual channels.

The memo was so unusual that it was sent all the way to Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson, who consulted the king before he announced that the demands had been approved.

By the time Raoul Wallenberg arrived in Budapest in July 1944, the Germans under the leadership of Adolf Eichmann had already sent away more than 400,000 Jewish men, women and children. They had been deported on 148 freight trains between the 14th of May and the 8th of July. When Wallenberg came to Budapest, only about 230,000 Jews were left.

The German SS officer Adolf Eichmann was now preparing a plan that in one day would exterminate the whole Jewish population in Budapest. In a report to Berlin he said that "the technical details will take a few days."

If this plan had been put into action Raoul Wallenberg's mission would have been meaningless. Then the "Jewish issue" would have been "permanently solved" for that part of Hungary. The head of state, Miklós Horthy, meanwhile received a letter from the Swedish King, Gustav V, with an appeal that the deportations should stop. Horthy sent a note to the Swedish king saying he "did everything in his power to ensure that the principals of humanity and justice would be respected." The German deportations were canceled and one train with 1,600 Jews was stopped at the border and sent back to Budapest.

Oddly enough the German authorities approved the cancellation of the deportations. The explanation may have been that Heinrich Himmler, one of the top Nazi officials during this time, played a high level game for peace. He thought he could negotiate a separate peace with the western allies and might have thought he'd stand a better chance if the pressure on the Jews was decreased. Adolf Eichmann could do nothing but wait.

At this time minister Carl Ivar Danielsson was head of the Swedish legation. His closest aide was secretary Per Anger. Raoul Wallenberg now headed the department responsible for helping the Jews. Before Wallenberg arrived the head of the Red Cross in Hungary, Valdemar Langlet, helped the Swedish legation. Langlet rented buildings for the Red Cross and put signs like "The Swedish Library" and "The Swedish Research Institute" on its doors. These buildings were then used as hiding places for Jews.

Raoul Wallenberg did not use traditional diplomacy. He more or less shocked the diplomats at the Swedish legation with his unconventional methods. Everything from bribes to extortion threats were used with success. But when the rest of the staff of the legation saw Wallenberg's results, he quickly got their unreserved support.

Raoul Wallenberg's first task was to design a Swedish protective pass to help the Jews against the Germans and Hungarians. He had previous experience that both the German and Hungarian authorities were weak for flashy symbols. He therefore had the passes printed in yellow and blue with the coat of arms of the Three Crowns of Sweden in the middle, and added the appropriate stamps and signatures on it. Of course Wallenberg's protective passes had no value whatsoever according to international laws, but it provoked respect. To begin with Wallenberg only had permission to issue 1,500 passes. Quickly, though, he managed to negotiate another 1,000, and through promises and empty threats to the Hungarian foreign ministry he eventually managed to raise the quota to 4,500 protective passes.





In reality Wallenberg managed to issue more than three times as many protective passes. He controlled a staff of several hundred co-workers. They were all Jews and thanks to their work with Wallenberg they didn't have to wear the degrading yellow star.

In August 1944, the Hungarian head of state, Horthy, fired his pro-German Prime Minister Sztójay and let General Lakatos succeed him. The situation for the Jews improved considerably. Through diplomatic pressure, mediated and emphasized by Raoul Wallenberg, the responsibility to "solve the Jewish issue in Hungary" was taken away from Adolf Eichmann.

Now Wallenberg thought his department at the legation could be dismantled and that he himself could return back to Sweden. He expected the invading and winning troops of the Soviet Union to soon take over Budapest.

On October 15, the head of state, Miklós Horthy, declared that he wanted peace with the Soviets. But his radio speech had barely been broadcast when the German troops took command. Horthy was overthrown immediately and replaced by the leader of the Hungarian Nazis, Ferenc Szálasi. He was the leader of the Arrow Cross organization, who was just as feared as the German Nazis for their cruel methods against the Jewish population. Adolf Eichmann returned and received a free hand to continue the terror against the Jews.

Raoul Wallenberg kept on fighting in spite of the ruling powers of evil and appeared often as an unwelcome witness to the atrocities. In many cases he managed to save Jews from the clutches of the Nazis with his firm action and courage as his only weapon.

Now Raoul started to build his "Swedish houses." It was some 30 houses in the Pest part of the city where the Jews could seek refuge. A Swedish flag hung in front of the door and Wallenberg declared the house Swedish territory. The population of the "Swedish houses" soon rose to 15,000.

The other neutral legations in Budapest started to follow Wallenberg's example and issued protective passes. A number of diplomats from other

countries were inspired to open their own "protective houses" for Jewish refugees.

Toward the end of the war, when the situation became increasingly desperate, Wallenberg issued a simplified form of his protective pass, one copied page with his signature alone. In the existing chaos even that worked.

The newly instated Hungarian Nazi government immediately let it be known that with the change of power the protective passes were no longer valid. Meanwhile, Wallenberg befriended the Baroness Elizabeth "Liesel" Kemény. She was the wife of the foreign minister, and with her cooperation the passes were made valid again.

During this time Eichmann started his brutal "death marches." He went through with his promised deportation plan by having large numbers of Jews leave Hungary by foot. The first march started November 20, 1944, and the conditions along the 200 kilometer long road between Budapest and the Austrian border were so horrendous that even the Nazis themselves complained.

The marching Jews could be counted in the thousands along never-ending rows of starving and tortured people. Raoul Wallenberg was in place all the time to hand out protective passes, food and medicine. He threatened and he bribed until he managed to free those with Swedish passes.

When Eichmann's killers transported the Jews in full trains, Wallenberg intensified his rescue efforts. He even climbed the train wagons, stood on the tracks, ran along the wagon roofs, and stuck bunches of protective passes down to the people inside. The German soldiers were ordered to open fire, but were so impressed by Wallenberg's courage that they deliberately aimed too high. Wallenberg could jump down unharmed and demand that the Jews with passes should leave the train together with him.

Raoul Wallenberg's department at the Swedish legation grew constantly and finally kept 340 persons busy. Another 700 people also lived in their building.

Toward the end of 1944, Wallenberg moved over the river Danube from Buda to Pest where the two Jewish ghettos were situated. The minimal level of law and order that once existed was now gone. The Arrow Cross, police and German war machine shared power.

Wallenberg searched desperately for suitable people to bribe, and found a very powerful ally in Pa'l Szalay, a high-ranking officer in the police force and an Arrow Cross member. (After the war, Szalay was the only Arrow Cross member that wasn't executed. He was set free in recognition for his cooperation with Wallenberg.)

The second week of January 1945 Raoul Wallenberg found out that Eichmann planned a total massacre in the largest ghetto. The only one who could stop it was general August Schmidhuber who was commander-in-chief for the German troops in Hungary.

Wallenberg's ally Szalay was sent to deliver a note to Schmidhuber

explaining that Raoul Wallenberg would make sure that the general would be held personally responsible for the massacre and that he would be hanged as a war criminal after the war. The massacre was stopped at the last minute thanks to Wallenberg's action.

Two days later, the Russians arrived and found 97,000 Jews alive in Budapest's two Jewish ghettos. In total 120,000 Jews survived the Nazi extermination in Hungary.

According to Per Anger, Wallenberg's friend and colleague, Wallenberg must be honored with saving at least 100,000 Jews.

On January 13, 1945, an advancing Soviet troop saw a man standing and waiting for them in front of a house with a large Swedish flag above the door. In fluent Russian, Raoul Wallenberg explained to a surprised Russian sergeant that he was Swedish chargé d'affaires for the Russian-liberated parts of Hungary. Wallenberg requested, and was given permission to visit the Soviet military headquarters in the city of Debrecen east of Budapest.

On his way out of the capital on January 17th—with Russian escort—Wallenberg and his driver stopped at the “Swedish houses” to say good-bye to his friends. To one of his colleagues, Dr. Ernő Pető, Wallenberg said that he wasn't sure if he was going to be the Russian's guest or their prisoner. Raoul Wallenberg thought he'd be back within eight days—but he has been missing since then.

Whether Raoul Wallenberg is alive or not is uncertain. The Russians claim that he died in Russian captivity on July 17, 1947. A number of testimonies indicate, however, that he was alive and that he still could be alive.

Before we elaborate on Raoul Wallenberg's captivity in the Soviet Union we have to straighten two things out. First, why did he want contact with the Russians in Debrecen? Secondly, why did the Russians arrest him?

In November 1944, Wallenberg had established a section in his department that under his supervision would make a detailed financial support plan for the surviving Jews. The Russians did not have the same views of Jews and, therefore, presumably couldn't understand that a person had devoted his soul to save them. Therefore it was important to Wallenberg to explain his rescue operation.

The Russians probably believed that Wallenberg had another reason for his rescue efforts. They probably suspected him of being an American spy and were almost certainly skeptical of Wallenberg's contact with the Germans.

Raoul Wallenberg and his driver Vilmos Langfelder never returned from Debrecen. According to reliable testimonies they were arrested and sent to Moscow. They were arrested by NKVD, an organization that later changed its name to KGB. Wallenberg and Langfelder were placed in separate cells in the Lubjanka prison according to eye witnesses.

Wallenberg wasn't the only diplomat in Budapest that aroused Soviet suspicion. The Swiss legation had also run extensive rescue operations for the Hungarian Jewish population. The Russians arrested a secretary of their legation together with a clerk and sent them to the Soviet Union. The Swiss

succeeded, however, in getting them extradited with Soviet citizens detained in Switzerland.

It would take some time before authorities in Stockholm became concerned about Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance. In a letter to the Swedish ambassador in Moscow, the Russian Vice Foreign Minister Dekanosov declared that "the Russian military authorities had taken measures and steps to protect Wallenberg and his belongings."

The Swedes, of course, expected Raoul Wallenberg to come home soon. When nothing happened, Raoul's mother, Maj von Dardel, contacted the Russian ambassador in Stockholm, Aleksandra Kollontaj, who explained that she could be calm, since her son was well kept in Russia. To the Swedish Foreign Minister Christian Günther's wife, Aleksandra Kollontaj said at the same time that it would be best for Wallenberg if the Swedish government wouldn't stir things up.

On March 8, 1945, the Soviet-controlled Hungarian radio announced that Raoul Wallenberg had been murdered on his way to Debrecen, probably by Hungarian Nazis or Gestapo agents. This created a certain passiveness with the Swedish government. Foreign Minister Östen Undén and Sweden's ambassador in the Soviet Union presumed that Wallenberg was dead. In most places, however, the radio message wasn't taken seriously.

Many people have drawn the conclusion that Sweden had an opportunity to negotiate for Wallenberg's release after the war, but that the Swedish side missed the chance.

From 1965 there is a speech from Sweden's Prime Minister at the time, Tage Erlander, which is included in a collection of documents regarding the research around Raoul Wallenberg. Erlander concluded that all efforts that had been taken shortly after the war were without results. In fact, the Soviet authorities had even denied knowledge of Wallenberg. Between 1947 and 1951 nothing new occurred. But when foreign prisoners started to be released from Russian jails many testimonies came regarding Raoul Wallenberg's fate after January 1945.

In April 1956, Prime Minister Tage Erlander traveled with Domestic Minister Gunnar Hedlund to Moscow where they met the Soviet representatives Nikita Khrushchev, Nikolai Bulganin and Vyacheslav Molotov. These men promised to re-investigate what had happened to Raoul Wallenberg.

On February 6, 1957, the Russians announced that they had made extensive investigations and found a document most likely regarding Raoul Wallenberg. In the hand-written document it was stated that "the for you familiar prisoner Wallenberg passed away this night in his cell." The document was dated July 17, 1947, and signed Smoltsov, head of the Lubjanka prison infirmary. The document was addressed to Viktor Abakumov, the minister for state security in the Soviet Union.

The Russians expressed regret in their letter to the Swedes that Smoltsov died in May 1953 and that Abakumov had been executed in connection with cleansing within the security police. The Swedes were very distrustful toward this declaration, but the Russians have to this day stuck to the same

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statement.

Testimonies from different prisoners who had been in Russian jails after January 1945 tell, in contradiction to the Russian information, that Raoul Wallenberg was imprisoned throughout the 1950's.

In 1965, the Swedish government published a new official report on the Wallenberg case. An earlier white book had been released in 1957. According to the new report, Erlander had done everything in his power to find out the truth about Raoul Wallenberg.

Now the Wallenberg case went into a phase when nothing much happened. The stream of war prisoners from the Soviet Union decreased, and the testimonies were few. At the end of the 70's, the case was brought up again. According to the Swedish foreign department, two very interesting testimonies were the basis for a note to Moscow requesting the case to be reexamined. The answer from the Kremlin was the same as earlier—Raoul Wallenberg died in 1947. On the grounds of additional material considered reliable, Foreign Minister Ola Ullsten sent another request in the beginning of the 80's regarding Raoul Wallenberg to the Russian chief of government Aleksei Kosygin. The reply was the same as usual—Raoul Wallenberg died in 1947.

During the 1980's, interest in Wallenberg grew around the world. In 1981, he became an honorary citizen of the United States, in 1985 in Canada, and in 1986 in Israel. All over the world, many people think he's still alive and demand that he be released from his Russian captivity.

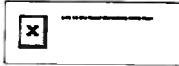
In Sweden and other countries—mainly the USA—Raoul Wallenberg associations work endlessly to find answers to what happened Raoul Wallenberg. In spite of the large number of secret documents disclosed after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Raoul Wallenberg's fate remains a mystery.



THE LAST KNOWN PICTURE TAKEN OF RAOUL WALLENBERG

(c) David Metzler

[Click here for more information about Raoul Wallenberg](#)



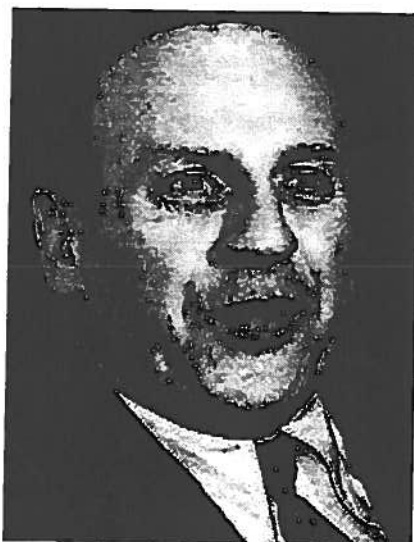
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Oskar Schindler



(1908-1974)

In December 1939, as occupied Poland was being torn apart by the savagery of the holocaust, Oskar Schindler, the unlikeliest of role models, took his first faltering steps from the darkness of Nazism towards the light of heroism. "If you saw a dog going to be crushed under a car," he said later of his wartime actions, "wouldn't you help him?"

Before the outbreak of war, Poland had been a relative haven for European Jews—Krakow's Jewish population numbered over 50,000. But when Germany invaded, destruction began immediately and it was merciless. Jews were herded into crowded ghettos, randomly beaten and humiliated, capriciously killed. Jewish property and businesses were summarily destroyed, or appropriated by the SS and 'sold' to Nazi 'investors', one of whom was the fast talking, womanizing, money hungry Oskar Schindler.

An ethnic German from what is now Moravia in the Czech Republic, Schindler grew up with all the privileges money could buy. He was born Catholic, but from an early age he inhabited a world of sin. His exploits with women are the stuff of barroom legend.

He married Emilie Schindler at nineteen, but was never without a mistress or two. Hard drinking and feckless, he had the soul of a gambler, winning big and losing bigger. He had presided over the demise of his family business and become a salesman when opportunity came knocking in the guise of the war.

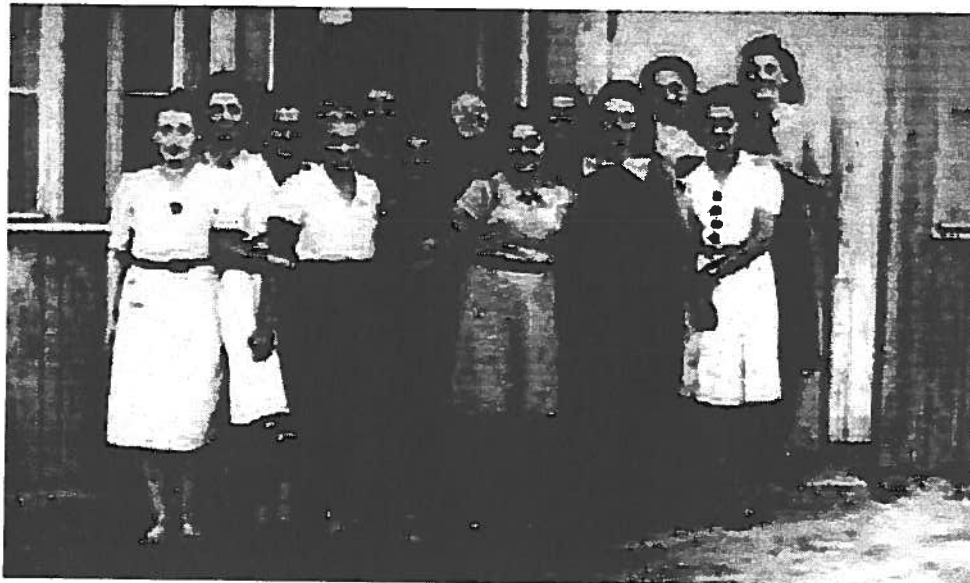
Never one to miss a chance to make money, he marched into Poland on the heels of the SS. He dived headfirst into the black-market and the underworld and soon made friends with the local gestapo bigwigs, softening them up with women, money and illicit booze. His newfound connections helped him acquire a factory which he ran with the cheapest labor around: Jewish.



Schindler (center) with German army officers.

At first he seemed like every other usurping German industrialist, driven by profit and unmoved by the means of his profiteering. But somewhere along the line, something changed. He succeeded in his quest for riches, but by the end of the war he had spent everything he made on keeping 1,300 Jewish men and women alive. "He negotiated the salvation of his 1,300 Jews by operating right at the heart of the system using all the tools of the devil—bribery, black marketeering and lies," said Thomas Keneally, whose book about this paradoxical man was the basis of the movie *Schindler's List*.

Not long after acquiring his "Emalia" factory—which produced enamel goods and munitions to supply the German front—the removal of Jews to death camps began in earnest. Schindler's Jewish accountant put him in touch with the few Jews with any remaining wealth. They invested in his factory, and in return they would be able to work there and perhaps be spared. He was persuaded to hire more Jewish workers, designating their skills as "essential," paying off the Nazis so they would allow them to stay in Krakow. Schindler was making money, but everyone in his factory was fed, no-one was beaten, no-one was killed. It became an oasis of humanity in a desert of moral torpor.



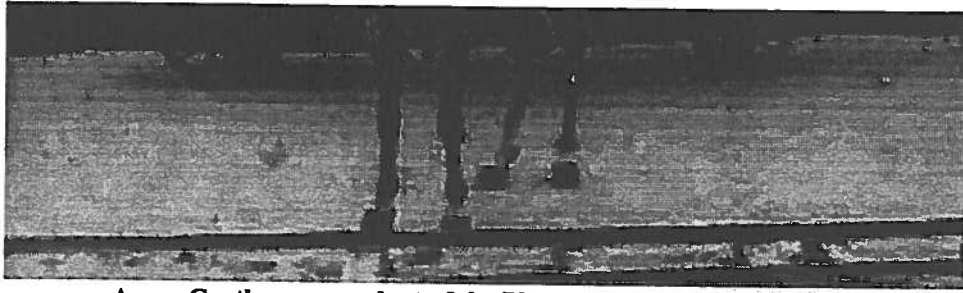
Office workers from the "Emalia" factory.

As the brutality of the holocaust escalated, Schindler's protection of his Jewish workers became increasingly active. In the summer of 1942, he witnessed a German raid on the Jewish ghetto. Watching innocent people being packed onto trains bound for certain death, something awakened in him. "Beyond this day, no thinking person could fail to see what would happen," he said later. "I was now resolved to do everything in my power to defeat the system."

By the autumn of 1944, Germany's hold on Poland had weakened. As the Russian army approached, the Nazi's tried desperately to complete their program of liquidation and sent all remaining Jews to die. But Schindler remained true to the "Schindlerjuden," the workers he referred to as "my children."

After the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto and the transfer of many Jews to the Plaszow concentration camp, Schindler used his influence to set up a branch of the camp for 900 Jewish workers in his factory compound in Zablocie and made his now famous list of the workers he would need for its operation.





Amon Goeth, commandant of the Plaszow camp (USHMM Photo)

The factory operated in its new location a year, making defective bullets for German guns. Conditions were grim, for the Schindlers as well as the workers. But Schindler saved most of these workers when he transferred his factory to Brunnlitz (Sudetenland) in October 1944.

When the war ended, Schindler fled to Argentina with his wife and a handful of his workers and bought a farm. In 1958, he abandoned his land, his wife and his mistress to return to Germany. He spent the remaining years of his life dividing his time between Germany and Israel, where he was honored and taken care of by his "Schindlerjuden."



Schindler (second from right) with a group of "Schindlerjuden."

He died in Frankfurt in 1974. His wife shed no tears, but his "children" did. His extraordinary story might have died with him but for their gratitude. In trying to answer the inevitable question, why did he do it, one of the survivors said: "I don't know what his motives were... But I don't give a damn. What's important is that he saved our lives."

Perhaps the question is not why he did it, but rather how could he not. And perhaps the answer is unimportant. It is his actions that matter now, testimony that even in

the worst of circumstances, the most ordinary of us can act courageously. If Oskar Schindler, flawed as he was, did it, then so might we, and that is reason enough to hope.





Source: Susan Pottinger and the Life Magazine Hall of Heroes and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photos also from the Holocaust Museum and The Story of Oscar Schindler.

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DENMARK

One of the few rays of light in the dark night of the Holocaust was the behavior of the non-Jewish citizens of Denmark toward their Jewish neighbors. Denmark was occupied by the Germans on April 9, 1940. During the first years of the Nazi occupation, the small Jewish community of eight thousand was allowed to go on living in its homes. In 1942, however, Germany decided to incorporate Denmark into Germany, and in 1943 the Nazis moved to deport Danish Jews to death camps. Word of this was leaked to the Danish resistance, which decided, in concert with the rest of the country, to save the country's Jews.

The attitude of the Danes toward the Jews was in marked contrast to that of almost all the rest of Europe, where most citizens either cooperated in the roundup of Jewish citizens, or remained indifferent to their fate. In Denmark the police refused to participate in rounding up the Jews: King Christian X encouraged the pro-Jewish forces by announcing that all Danish citizens were one, and that no one had the right to treat Danish Jews differently from any other citizens. A popular, though not true, myth circulated that the king himself put on the *yellow badge that the Jews were required to wear, and instructed all Danes to do the same.

What the country did do, and this is no myth, was send virtually the entire Jewish community by boat into Sweden. Sweden was neutral during the Second World War and had announced its readiness to accept all of Denmark's Jews. The rescue was carried out over three weeks, and when the Nazis came to deport the Jews on October 1-2, 1943, they found only about four hundred who had not yet escaped.

These four hundred Jews were sent to the *Theresienstadt concentration camp, but the Danes continued to exert themselves on their behalf. The government repeatedly demanded permission to inspect the camp, and eventually the Danish Red Cross was allowed to visit Theresienstadt. Because of their government's intercessions, the Danish Jews were not deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz. Fifty-one of them died at the camp of "natural causes" (of course, the horrible living conditions there hastened their deaths). Thus, only about 2 percent of

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Danish Jewry perished during the Holocaust, less than one fortieth of the percentage of Jews killed in much of Europe. At the war's end, when the Danish Jews came back from Sweden, most found their property intact.

Since the war, Denmark has become for Jews a symbol of hope and of love, a nation of Righteous Gentiles (see preceding entry). When I was twenty, and traveled to Europe, the first country I visited was Denmark. As a Jew who had read extensively about the Holocaust since my teenage years, it was the only country in Europe toward which I felt unambivalent affection. Many other Jews I know have expressed to me the same sentiment.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READINGS: Leni Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry*; L. Goldberger, *The Rescue of the Danish Jews: Moral Courage Under Stress*; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 5, pp. 1538-1540; Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, pp. 372-374.

199

HOLOCAUST REVISIONISTS

More than any other event in human history, the Holocaust discredited antisemitism. Before 1945, few antisemites had any compunctions about publicly announcing their hatred for Jews. The revelations of the gas chambers, however, made antisemitism seem so odious that Jew-haters had one of two choices: either to call themselves anti-Zionists rather than antisemites—a tactic generally adopted by enemies of the Jews in the Muslim and Communist worlds—or to simply deny that the Holocaust had occurred.

Amazingly, and despite very extensive pictorial and eyewitness evidence, the testimony of tens of thousands of survivors, and the confessions of thousands of perpetrators, a growing number of books, pamphlets, and articles have been published claiming that the Holocaust never happened. To make their case sound academically respectable, their authors refer to themselves as Holocaust revisionists.

Many of these "revisionists" do, indeed, come from the academic community. Arthur Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University near Chicago, wrote *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, a book that offered "proof" that the concentration camps were work camps where no Jews were killed. Given the indisputable evidence of a great decline in the number of Jews living in Europe after 1945, Butz

APPENDIX V

The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning, Maurice Lamm. JMAFAMON David Kubliska
New York, 1969.

Rending the Garment: Keriah

קריעה

The most striking Jewish expression of grief is the rending of garments by the mourner prior to the funeral service.

The Bible records many instances of rending the clothes after the news of death. When Jacob saw Joseph's coat of many colors drenched with what he thought to be his son's blood, he rent his garments. Likewise, David tore his clothes when he heard of the death of King Saul, and Job, who knew grief so well, stood up and rent his mantle.

The rending is an opportunity for psychological relief. It allows the mourner to give vent to his pent-up anguish by means of a controlled, religiously sanctioned act of destruction. Maimonides, according to the interpretation of B. H. Epstein (*Torah Temimah* on Lev. 10:6), notes with sharp insight that this tear satisfies the emotional need of the moment, or else it would not be permitted as it is a clear violation of the biblical command not to cause waste. For this reason, we may assume, the tear for parents must be made with bare hands.

Geoffrey Gorer, in his book *Death, Grief and Mourning*, notes that "although our culture gives no symbolic expression to anger, a considerable number of others have done so." This is seen in such rituals as the "destruction of the dead person's property or possessions or, slightly more indirectly, by the various mutilations which mourners have to inflict upon themselves as a sign of the pain which the dead have caused them. According to some psychoanalysts, this anger is a component of all mourning, and one of the main functions of the mourning process is to *work through* and dissipate this anger in a symbolic and, to a great extent, unconscious fashion."

Keriah may serve also as a substitute for the ancient pagan custom of tearing the flesh and the hair which symbolizes the loss of one's own flesh and blood in sympathy

for the deceased and which is not permitted in Jewish law (Deuteronomy 14:1-2).

The halachic requirement to "expose the heart" (that is, that the tear for deceased parents must be over the heart), indicates that the tear in the apparel represents a torn heart. The prophet Joel (2:13) chastises the Jew to rend the heart itself, not only the garment over the heart, indicating that the external tear is a symbol of the broken heart within.

Another, and relatively unknown, reason is advanced in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Moed Katan* 3:5): The "exposing of the heart" is performed because the mourner has lost the ability to fulfill the biblical command to honor father and mother. We suffer deeply when we can no longer give love to our beloved. Of course, respect for parents can, and should, be expressed after their death, but, according to many authorities, it is a rabbinic, rather than a biblical enactment. *Keriah*, thus, also symbolizes the rending of the parent-child relationship, and confronts the mourner with the stabbing finality of this separation, expressed on his own clothes and on his own person for all to see.

Who Must Rend the Clothing?

1. Seven relatives are obligated to perform this command: son, daughter; father, mother; brother, sister; and spouse.
2. They must be adults, above the age of thirteen. Minors, who are in fact capable of understanding the situation, and appreciating the loss, should have other relatives or friends make the tear for them. For pre-Bar Mitzvah youngsters who are too immature to understand the gravity of the situation, one should nonetheless make a slight symbolic cut in the garment. This unites them with the family at the terrible time of tears and tragedy.
3. Divorced mates may cut their clothing, but they are not *obligated* to do so. They also may, of course, bemoan the

death with the others and accompany the deceased to the cemetery.

4. Sons-in-law or daughters-in-law, if this is their sincere desire, may rend their garments out of respect for their spouse's tragedy. This should be done only with the assurance that their own living parents will not object.

5. Bride and groom should not perform the clothes-tearing ritual during the first seven days following the wedding. This time is one of inviolate joy even in the face of grief.

6. Mentally ill patients, who cannot appreciate the gravity of their loss, or may not see the death in its proper perspective, should not tear the clothing. If it is the patient's parent who has died, rending should be performed after sanity has returned. In the case of the death of other relatives, once it has been delayed it is not to be done at all.

7. The physically handicapped, or those too weak to make the tear themselves during the *shivva*, should not have their garments cut subsequently, even though they recover. They felt the pain and anguish at the time of the occurrence of death, and the later rending is purposeless, as the rending must take place during the time of most intense grief.

When Should the Rending Take Place?

The garment should be torn at either one of three times:

1. At the moment of hearing of the death, wherever the mourner may be at that time.
2. At the home or the chapel, immediately prior to the service.
3. At the cemetery, prior to the interment.

Today, it is usually done at the funeral chapel; this is the preferable procedure. At this time, the rabbi is present and can supervise the rending in accordance with the traditional laws. Also, this is the time that the entire family is gathered together, and the relatives can stand by one an-

other united through this emotionally charged expression of common bereavement.

The following are the laws of rending for special circumstances:

1. On Sabbaths and holidays the mourners should certainly be encouraged to delay the *keriah* until the service at the chapel. If, however, they desire to do so as soon as is possible, they must wait at least until nightfall.

2. During *chol ha'moed*, the days between the first and last days of Passover and Succot, the *keriah* may be performed. Some rabbis may prefer to wait until after the holidays, especially if there are no sons or daughters, and it is, therefore, proper to allow the rabbi to make that decision.

3. If news of the death of one of the seven relatives, noted above, reached the mourners after interment, but within 30 days thereafter, they must rend the garment upon hearing the news. If the news reached them more than 30 days after the death then:

- a. For parents there is no time limit. The garment must be rent no matter how late.
- b. For other relatives there is no obligation to rend after 30 days.

If the mourners forgot to rend at the proper time, then:

1. For parents—they should rend as soon as they recall their omission. This may be done even if the time elapsed is very long.
2. For other relatives—if it was recalled during *shivva* (the first seven days of mourning), the tear should be made then. Afterwards, it should not be made.

However, the blessing that usually accompanies the *keriah* should be recited only within the first *three* days after death, but not later. The reason for this is that the blessing may be recited only in the midst of intense grief,

and this stage of grief is considered by the law to last until the fourth day, after which time it slowly diminishes.

Which Clothing Should Be Rent?

The clothing to be rent is customarily the outer clothing usually worn at room temperature. This precludes the cutting of the overcoat and underclothes.

1. For men, the vest should be cut, if it is usually worn by the mourner. If it is not usually worn, the suit, jacket or sweater should be rent.

Some Orthodox rabbis have permitted, and declared valid for the performance of *keriah*, the rending of a tie which is always worn. The reason for this is that it satisfies the conditions required for *keriah*: It is close to the neck, so that it is recognizable as not merely another tear, and it is a garment that is almost always worn. It is, technically, an article of clothing in that its size is the width of three fingers square, which is considered permissible with regard to carrying it on the Sabbath. (Were it not an article of clothing it would not be permitted to be worn on the Sabbath.)

2. For ladies, the dress, or blouse, or sweater should be cut. Clothing may be changed for this rending. It is not necessary or desirable that new clothes be worn. The mourner may change into used clothing for this occasion.

Should a Pinned Ribbon Be Used?

The rending of the clothes expresses the deepest feelings of sorrow and anguish. It is the symbol of a broken heart and a genuine mark of separation from one who was dearly beloved, with whom one had a blood relationship, or ties of matrimony.

The grief we express at such moments taps the deepest wells of our humanity, and the manner in which we manifest it should be equally authentic. The anguish is exquisite

and, one might even say, sacred, and the way in which we express it should be no less sacred. It is appropriate that this form of release of sorrow be sanctioned by faith and by centuries of ancient custom, going back often to biblical times.

How shallow, how disappointing, how pitifully trivial, therefore, to symbolize these authentic sentiments not by an act of historic and religious significance, but by the little black ribbon or button—invented by enterprising American undertakers! Tradition calls upon us to tear *our* garments, to put the mark of the broken heart on *our own* clothing—and not to vent our feelings on a meaningless and impersonal strip of cloth pinned on us by a stranger.

Keriah is too personally meaningful to substitute for it a petty gimmick, the expression of penury, rather than grief, thereby desecrating our own most genuine human experiences.

Nevertheless, if for some reason the ribbon has been used at the funeral service, the mourner should make a tear in the proper clothing upon his return home.

Where Should the Cut Be Made?

For parents: The tear should be made on the left side—over the heart—and should be plainly visible.

It should be torn vertically, beginning near the neck and cut down approximately three inches. The initial cut may be made with a knife (by anyone close by), but then should be torn by hand by the mourner himself.

The tear should not be made along a seam, as it must appear to be a purposeful scar in the clothing, and not merely an accidental unthreading.

For other relatives: The tear is made on the right side, and need not show. Thus, the cut may be inside the lapel of a jacket, or the lining of a sweater or dress. Also, it may be done by others, not necessarily by the hand of the mourner himself.

The woman mourner must retain her modesty and, consequently, the tear in the garment should be made by herself in a relatively inconspicuous part of the clothing so as not to expose herself immodestly.

How Long Should the Rent Garments Be Worn?

For parents: The rent should be clearly visible during *shiva*. If a change of clothes is required during that time, the changed clothes, too, should be cut. After *shiva* the rent clothes need not be worn. A daughter, for reasons of dignity and modesty, may baste the clothing that was torn as soon after the funeral as she wishes. The son may baste his clothing only after thirty days. But neither son nor daughter may ever permanently sew these clothes. The wound left by the passing of parents may be healed, but the scar never completely disappears.

If a major holiday occurs during *shiva*, the clothes may be basted before sundown. The torn garments are not worn on the Sabbath during *shiva*.

For other relatives: Mourners for relatives other than father or mother are required to perform the rending of the clothes, but need not make the rend visible. Thus, if they change their clothing during the *shiva*, they need not rend the new set of clothes. The clothes may be basted after the *shiva*, and sewn completely after the thirty-day period of mourning. If a major holiday occurs during *shiva*, the mourner may sew the clothes before sundown. "There is a time to rend the garment, and a time to mend it," says Ecclesiastes (3:7).

Posture During Keriah

The law requires that the rending of the garments be performed while standing. The posture of accepting grief in Jewish life is always erect, symbolizing both strength in the face of crisis, and respect for the deceased.

The Funeral Service

לידה

The funeral service is a brief and simple service designed primarily as *yekara d'schichba*—for the honor and dignity of the deceased. The worthy values he lived by, the good deeds he performed, and the noble aspects of his character are eulogized. The function of the eulogy, however, is not to comfort the bereaved, although by highlighting the good and the beautiful in the life of the departed it affords an implicit consolation for the mourners.

There is also great psychological benefit from the funeral service itself although this, too, is not its primary purpose. It enables many friends and relatives to participate in the situation of bereavement and, thus, relieve the terrible loneliness of the mourners. In addition, since it not only praises the deceased, but also confronts all who attend with the terrible fact of their own mortality, it impels them to "consider their days," to take stock and live their lives creatively.

The service consists of a selection from the Psalms appropriate to the life of the deceased, a panegyric of his finer qualities which his survivors should seek to implant in their own lives, and a Memorial Prayer asking that God shelter his soul "on the wings of His Divine presence."

The most commonly used Psalm at the funeral service is Psalm 23.

Psalm 23

מְנוּחָה לְדָוִד ייִ רֵשִׁי, לֹא אֶחָסֵר. בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיעֵנִי,
עַל הַיַּם קִנְחוֹת יִנְחֵנִי. יוֹשֵׁב, יִנְחֵנִי בַמַּיְמֹת. אֶדְרֹךְ לַקְּוֹשׁ,
שְׂמוֹ. וְגַם כִּי אֶלֶף בָּנִים צִלְמֹת לֹא אֶירָא רָע, כִּי אֶתֵּה עִמָּךְ.
שְׂבָבֶיךָ וּמִשְׁעֵנֶיךָ, הַמָּדָר יִנְחֵנִי. מִשְׁרָף לִפְנֵי שְׁלֹכֹו יִגְדֵר צִדְרִי.
דְּלִמְסָף בְּשֹׁאֵן רֹאשִׁי, כּוֹסֵי רִגְלֵי אֹרֶךְ טוֹב תִּסְמָךְ. וְדִרְשׁוּנֵי קָלִי
יִמֵי סִינַי וְשִׁבְעֵי קָבֵיחַ ייִ לְאֹרֶךְ יָמֵי.

be condemned. The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it."

Commentary

What is expressed here is despair over the brevity of man's life. It asks: "What can be the significance of a life that withers so quickly?" But faith informs us that, nonetheless, there is a God who guides us. Observe the good man! God will care for the upright in heart. He shall ascend the mountain of the Lord.

Other Psalms or selections from the Book of Proverbs are chosen by the rabbi for appropriate occasions and for different personal qualities of the deceased. Frequently, "A Woman Of Valor" is read for a kind and gracious lady. Other selections are chosen for a person who died at a young age.

The Memorial Prayer

The Memorial Prayer is a beautiful one having been chanted in the same way for many years.

For a Male

אל קלא רחמים, שוכן בפרדסים, הקצא קנוחה וכוונה
 קחת פנאי השכינה, במעלות קדושים וטהורים כונה הקדיש
 מוהרים, את נשמת — אהלך לעולם. בעבור אהרונ
 צדקה בעד הושרת נשמתו, בנן ערן תהא מנוחהו. לכו בעל
 הרתמים יטהרה בסקר הנפיו לעולמים, ויצרור בצדור
 החיים את נשמתו. יהי הוא נחלתו ויהיה על קשקבו בשלום,
 נאמר אמן.

"O God, full of compassion, Thou who dwellest on high! Grant perfect rest beneath the sheltering wings of Thy presence, among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness on the heavens, unto the soul of who has gone unto eternity, and in

whose memory charity is offered. May his repose be in paradise. May the Lord of Mercy bring him under the cover of His wings forever, and may his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May the Lord be his possession, and may he rest in peace. Amen."

For a Female

אל קלא רחמים, שוכן בפרדסים, הקצא קנוחה וכוונה
 קחת פנאי השכינה, במעלות קדושים וטהורים כונה הקדיש
 מוהרים, את נשמת — אהלך לעולם. בעבור אהרונ
 צדקה בעד הושרת נשמתו, בנן ערן תהא מנוחהו. לכו בעל
 הרתמים יטהרה בסקר הנפיו לעולמים, ויצרור בצדור
 החיים את נשמתו. יהי הוא נחלתו ויהיה על קשקבו בשלום,
 נאמר אמן.

"O God, full of compassion, Thou who dwellest on high Grant perfect rest beneath the sheltering wings of Thy presence, among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness on the heavens, unto the soul of whose memory charity is offered. May her response be in paradise. May the Lord of Mercy bring her under the cover of His wings forever, and may her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May the Lord be her possession, and may she rest in peace. Amen."

The prayer is self-explanatory. Unlike the Kaddish, this is a prayer in behalf of the dead. While it is not *technically* to be considered a "lament," nonetheless custom dictates that it should not be chanted when *Tachanun* is not recited in the synagogue. For this prayer you will have to know the Hebrew name of the deceased and the deceased's father. If these names are not available, the English names will have to be used.

The Eulogy

תפוח

The eulogy is a significant focus of the funeral service. One of the most important obligations of mourners and heirs is to provide for this eulogy. Abraham, the first patriarch of the Jewish people, eulogized his wife Sarah, and that has been the custom of Jews to this day.

Purpose of the Eulogy

Following the lesson of Abraham, the purpose of the eulogy is twofold. First, is *hesped*—the praising of the deceased for his worthy qualities. Second, is *bechi*—expressing the grief and the sense of loss experienced by the mourners and the entire Jewish community.

Very wisely, the Jewish tradition requires the eulogizing of the deceased to be *kara'ni*, balanced and appropriate. It may not grossly exaggerate, or invent, qualities that the deceased did not in fact possess. Such praise is a mockery and an effrontery to the departed, rather than a tribute to his personal virtues. In addition, the mourners should remember that although the deceased may have been undistinguished in many ways, and lacking certain moral qualities, there is always a substratum of goodness and decency in all men which can be detected if properly sought. Sometimes, the mourners are too close to their departed and see only mediocrity and perhaps meanness. But, sometimes, a more objective view reveals virtues unknown or latent: honesty or frankness or humaneness or respect or tolerance, or simply the ability to raise decent children in a violent and unstable world.

Where Is the Eulogy Delivered?

The eulogy is spoken, almost always, at the chapel, or at the home or, occasionally, at the cemetery prior to burial. For outstanding scholars or community leaders, it may be

delivered during *shiva* or on the thirtieth day after the funeral.

Eulogies generally are not delivered if the funeral occurs on major festivals, such as Passover, Shavuot and Succot, or on other holidays such as Hannukah, Purim, Rosh Chodesh (the first day of the Hebrew month), on afternoons immediately preceding these holidays, or on Friday afternoons, or on days immediately following the three major festivals. The reason for this is that although the funeral is an occasion of grief for the family of the deceased, the joyous spirit of the holiday, which devolves on the entire community, overrides the obligation and desire for lamentation by individuals. However, while *bechi*, the bewailing, contradicts the spirit of the holiday, *hesped*, spoken in the correct manner, often does not; hence it is, on occasion, permitted to speak a very short eulogy emphasizing only the praise of the deceased, and encouraging the relatives to incorporate these qualities into their own lives.

Eulogies should not be made if this was the specific request of the deceased. Because the eulogy is *yekara d'schichba*, for the honor of the dead rather than for the survivors, an individual may elect to forego the honor. However, the mourners should not take this decision upon themselves if they merely conjecture that this is what the deceased would have wanted. Most people deserve a eulogy and should not be deprived of it because of speculation, although the conjecture may have been made in good faith.

Preparing for the Eulogy

Frequently rabbis must deliver eulogies for people they have never met. Under conditions peculiar to the modern American Jewish community, this is almost inevitable. In order to make a dignified and honest presentation, the rabbi will have to know certain basic facts of the life of the deceased. Be prepared to tell him all of the departed's good qualities, and do it enthusiastically. Every man has a unique image. Do not hesitate to put your heart into the description.

Also, the rabbi will want to know the relationship of the deceased with the family, how he earned his livelihood, what was his educational background, the extent of his observance of Judaism, and his identification with the Jewish people. If there has been a divorce or a particular hatred or difficulty or frustration in his life, advise the rabbi of these facts. This discussion with the rabbi should be held by one close to the deceased, but who is not so emotionally exercised that he cannot impart the necessary information.

Rituals of a Fraternal Order

A secular ceremony is out of place during a religious service. However, a non-sectarian burial program of a fraternal order which is designed solely to honor the deceased and is accomplished only by kind words from friends, may be used. The family should ascertain that there are no christological elements in the service, such as the "Lord's Prayer." Even though this prayer contains no specific mention of Christianity its source is the Christian Bible, and it is out of place at a Jewish funeral. Care should be taken that there be no physical contact with the body, and that this ceremony take place before, not after, the religious service. It should be brief and unostentatious. This ceremony should take place only if it was the sincere and express desire of the deceased.

The recessional, performed by wheeling the casket from the chapel to the hearse, should be attended to by members of the Jewish faith.

Escorting the Deceased to the Cemetery

The profound significance of this aspect of the funeral is generally not appreciated. The sages considered the preparing and escorting of the deceased to his final resting place an extremely important symbol of respect. They refer to it as *gemillat chesed shel emet*, an act of genuine, selfless

kindness. They insisted, as they did in few other instances, that a man should interrupt even the study of Torah to assist in removing the deceased from the home and conveying him to the cemetery. The sages of the Talmud declared that one who sees a funeral procession and does not accompany the dead—at least briefly—deserves to be banished from the community.

Preparing the Body and Escorting It

1. When no other Jews are available to care for the deceased, the dead person is considered technically a *met mizvah*, an "abandoned" corpse, which places the obligation for burial upon the first Jew who finds it. Even the High Priest in ancient times who was not otherwise permitted to handle a strange corpse, was under full obligation to bury the deserted dead. Thus, when no other Jews are available, one must sacrifice even very important work, or the study of Torah and the performance of other religious duties, and certainly other pleasurable activities, to help prepare the body for burial, and also to accompany the deceased to the grave and bury it. There is no difference as to whether or not one is related to, or acquainted with, the departed.

2. When other Jews are available for preparing the body, but one is not sure as to whether there will be a *minyán* for the average deceased, or a respectable representation for the scholar and community leader, there is no requirement to cease working or studying during the period of preparation. However, there *is* an obligation to escort the departed to the cemetery even if one must sacrifice time from work.

3. When Jews are available both to prepare and accompany the body, and if one is not doing required and important work or study, one should escort the deceased to the cemetery at least symbolically by walking in the direction of the hearse some six or eight feet to indicate respect for the deceased and sympathy for the mourners. It does

year, but 12 months. Thus, on leap year, when the Hebrew calendar adds one full month, called Adar Sheni, only 12 months are observed, but not the thirteenth that is added to make the leap year. This applies to all mourning observances except Kaddish, which is recited only 11 months, as will be described in the next chapter.

Survey of Observances

Following is a brief survey of the observances of the 12-month period:

1. Haircutting, technically prohibited for 12 months, is permitted upon the occasion of social reproach after the *sheloshim*, as indicated above.
2. Similarly, the wearing of new clothes is permitted upon "social reproach" after the *sheloshim*, and after being worn for a brief period of time by others, although technically it is a twelve-month observance.
3. The mourner should change his usual seat in his synagogue at prayer. On the Sabbath he may sit in his usual place.
4. The mourner should, in general, pay closer attention to educational, charitable and religious matters for these, say the sages, are most eloquent tributes to the teachings of the deceased parent. Thus, it is customary for the mourner to study a portion of the Torah before or after daily services. He should also learn to lead all or part of the congregational services.
5. Regulations pertaining to the recital of Kaddish, and participation in joyous celebrations, will be treated in the following chapters.

THE KADDISH

Transliteration and Translation

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Mourner: *Yisgadal v'yiskadash shmai raba*. Magnified and sanctified be His great name.

Cong: Amen.

Mourner: *B'olmo deev'ro chiv'usai*. In this world which He has created in accordance with His will, *v'yamlich malchusai, b'chayechon u'vyomechon*, may He establish his kingdom during your lifetime, *u'vchayai d'chol ba'is Yisroel*, and during the life of all the House of Israel, *ba'agolah u'vizman koriv, v'imru amen*. Speedily, and let us say, Amen.

Mourner: *Y'hai shmai rabah m'varach, l'olam u'laimet olmaya!* Let His great name be blessed for ever and to all eternity!

Cong: (Repeats above verse.)

Mourner: *Yisborach v'yishtabach v'yispa-er v'yisromam*; Blessed, praised, glorified and exalted; *v'yisnasei v'yis-hadar v'yisaleh v'is-halal*, extolled, honored, magnified and lauded, *shemei d'Kudsha, b'rich Hu*. Be the name of the Holy one, blessed be He.

Cong: *B'rich Hu*. Blessed be He.

Mourner: *L'aila min kol birchasa v'shirasa, tushbechasa v'nechamasa*, He is greater than all blessings, hymns, praises and consolations, *da'amiron b'olmo; v'imru, Amen*. Which can be uttered in this world; and let us say Amen.

Cong: Amen.

Mourner: *Y'hai shlama raba min shmaya*, May abundant peace from heaven descend upon us, *v'chayim alenu v'al kol Yisroel; v'imru amen*. And may life be renewed for us and for all Israel; and let us say, Amen.

Cong: Amen.

Mourner: *Oseh shalom bimeromav, Hu ya'aseh shalom*, He who makes peace in the heavens, may He make peace, *alenu v'al Kol Yisroel; v'imru amen*. For us and for all Israel; and let us say, Amen.

Cong: Amen.

History of Kaddish

The Kaddish is a vigorous declaration of faith. It is one of the most beautiful, deeply-significant and spiritually-moving prayers in the Jewish liturgy. It is an ancient Aramaic prose-poem, a litany whose word-music, strong rhythms, stirring sounds, and alternating responses of leader and congregation, cast sheer hypnotic power over the listeners. It has well been noted that the Kaddish is the echo of Job in the prayerbook: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is a call to God from the depths of catastrophe, exalting His name and praising Him, despite the realization that He has just wrenched a human being from life. Like the *Kol Nidre* prayer of the Day of Atonement, the significance of Kaddish is usually taken for

granted. It is a response from the sub-vaults of the soul—almost a primitive, mesmerized response to the sacred demand to sanctify Almighty God. Its passionate recitation has inspired a "healthy, cheerful manliness" in a time of deep sorrow.

The Kaddish appears in the traditional service no less than 13 times. It is recited at the conclusion of all the major prayers and at the conclusion of the service. It also serves as a transition recital at every minor turning-point in the service. It is recited after a Talmud study period, at the cemetery after burial, at services during the year of mourning, and at every *yahrzeit*. These sages said that one who recites the Kaddish with all his inner power and conviction will merit the abolition of any severe Divine decree directed against him. In fact, they contended that the whole world itself, as it were, is maintained because of its recital, and that it redeems the deceased, specifically from perdition.

The Kaddish was considered so vital to the religious life of the Jew that it was recited in Aramaic, the spoken tongue of the Jewish masses in ancient times, so that every individual would understand it. In testimony to its continuing power, it is recited in that language to this very day. Another reason suggested for the use of the common Aramaic language is that it functioned as an educational device. It taught that the daily, secular life must be infused and interpenetrated by holiness, the epitome of which is expressed in the Kaddish. Inevitably, the Kaddish became so very popular that the sages actually had to forewarn the people lest they come to rely on it as on some magical power, and lest they increase the number of recitations, possibly leading to the undesirable consequence that a prayer for the dead might become central to the worship service.

For all its majesty and grandeur and importance, the origins of the Kaddish are beclouded in the obscurity of our ancient religious tradition. From the sparse, brief, yet emphatic, references to the Kaddish in the Talmud, it is

evident that the recitation of the essence of the Kaddish: *Yehai shmai rabbah*, "May His great name be blessed"—was so well-established a custom that its origin and significance were simply taken for granted. It is probable that the Kaddish was formulated after the destruction of the first Temple and was recited primarily after a lecture or discourse on a Torah theme. It then slipped easily into the worship service into which its themes and responses fitted admirably.

There arose five variations of the basic Kaddish which embodied the *yehai shmai rabbah*, the central core of every Kaddish.

1. The abbreviated form, called the "Half Kaddish," is used as a transitional theme following minor portions of the service.
2. The "Complete Kaddish" is used to terminate major parts of the service and, thus, includes the prayer, *tikkabel*, asking God to accept the heartfelt prayers just uttered.
3. The "Rabbi's Kaddish" is used as an epilogue to the study of rabbinic literature, and contains the rubric *al Yisrael*, a prayer for the welfare of students of Torah—and of all Israel—in the hope that they may devote themselves uninterruptedly to their sacred tasks.

Until this point in its history the Kaddish was considered highly important, but its significance was appreciated only by scholars and students who understood the deeper meaning of the prayers. In the tractate *Soferim*, an early medieval *geonic* document, we are told that it soon came to be used as a solemn recitation at the end of the *shiva* period, when mourning the death of a scholar. The Kaddish began to ride the crest of popularity when, in order to avoid embarrassing distinctions between scholar and layman, it came to be used for all who died and by all, especially youngsters, who did not know how to recite the prayers or study the Oral Law. It then began to engage the

minds of all Jews, knowledgeable or illiterate, and it was recited at the closing of every Jewish grave.

4. Thus, a fourth form of Kaddish arose, the "Burial Kaddish," which adds one paragraph referring to the resurrection of the dead and the restoration of the Temple. (For transliteration of the Burial Kaddish, see below.) It thus became associated with the deepest emotions of man.

5. The service itself soon incorporated a fifth form of Kaddish, the "Mourner's Kaddish," which was recited for the first year after interment, making it the primary prayer for the Jewish bereaved of every age. While there remains nothing explicit in the Mourner's Kaddish that refers to the grave, or the dead, or to life after death, the recitation of the Kaddish was so well patterned to the mood of the mourner that it became a cherished part of the Jewish people, regardless of denominational attachment.

The Function of the Kaddish

The Mourner's Kaddish performs two pragmatic functions: 1) It blends in with the internal spirit of the mourner, imperceptibly healing his psychological wounds, and 2) it teaches the mourner vital and profound lessons about life and death, and the conquest of evil. It is therefore, no accident of spiritual history that the Kaddish has become so important to those stricken with grief, and that, in the course of time, it became the hallmark of bereavement.

The Kaddish as Consolation

As far back as ancient times, the Kaddish was associated, albeit indirectly, with consolation, *nechamah*. In the earliest source dealing with the Mourner's Kaddish we find that the leader of the service proceeded to the rear of the synagogue where the mourners were congregated, and publicly

comforted them with the mourner's blessing and the Kaddish. It should be noted that the Kaddish recitation coincides, and is precisely coterminous, with the length of time during which tradition enjoins the Jew to comfort mourners bereaved of their parents, namely, 12 months. (Only later did the tradition reduce this period to 11 months.)

In a spirit of consolation and surrender this beautiful litany begins with the admission that the world that is known only to Him, the Omniscient Creator of the universe, remains mysterious and paradoxical to man. It ends with an impassioned hope, expressed in the words of the friends of Job as they sought to comfort him, *oseh shalom bimeirov*, that He who is sufficiently mighty to make peace among the celestial bodies may also bring peace to all mankind.

Finally, we pray to achieve, in the words of the Kaddish, the *nechemata*, the consolation of all of the Jewish people, not only for their dead, but for the destruction of their ancient Temple and their holy city, Jerusalem. Indeed, many rabbis maintain that the Kaddish finds its origin in the prayer composed by the men of the Great Assembly, specifically for the consolation of the population following the destruction of the first Temple and their subsequent exile. It is, in fact, in response to this historic tragedy that Ezekiel first cries out the words from which tradition has drawn the opening words of the Kaddish: "I have exalted and sanctified My name and I have made it known in the eyes of all the nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." The Master of all will bring His people salvation.

Besides the *concepts* found in the Kaddish, the very *words* offer implicit comfort. Because of the accentuation and repetition of the positive thoughts of "life" and "peace," these values become impressed upon the bewildered, and those with saddened hearts. It transfers, subliminally, the fixed, inner gaze of the mourner from the departed to the

living, from crisis to peace, from despair to hope, from isolation to community.

Indeed, the very crucial moment when man's faith is most shaken, when very likely he feels rebellious against God for the death that has befallen him, he rises to recite the praises of the Creator: *Yisgadal v'yiskadash . . . ,* magnified and sanctified be He who created the universe . . . All the laws of nature operate in accordance with His own will. Just at the time when man's focus is on the Kingdom of Heaven, the world of the dead, the destination of his beloved, the Kaddish quietly, and almost imperceptibly, transfers his gaze to God's kingdom on earth, among the living—*v'yamlich malchusai b'chayechon u'vyomechon*, "May He establish His kingdom during your lifetime and in your days." When man's vision is blurred with images of a breathless frame, with shrouds and coffin and grave, with the ultimate decay and decomposition of the human being, the Kaddish fills the mind of the mourner with "life" and "days" and "this world," by the constant, hypnotic repetition, morning and night, of the words *chayim* and *yamin* and *olam*. When the mourner experiences disorientation and disruption, a sense of agitation and conflict and guilt, the Kaddish mesmerizes him with thoughts of eternal rest and quiet, and emphasizes over and over again the peace that God made in the heavens, and the *shalom* that He brings to people on earth.

One other major technique of consolation in the Kaddish is the insistence, because it is a prayer of holiness, that it be recited only in public quorum, never privately. The recitation, usually made alongside other mourners, creates a fellowship of the bereaved in a time of profound loneliness and helplessness. It teaches, implicitly, that others have experienced similar pains; that death is a natural, if often untimely, end to all life; that the rhythm of man has followed the same beat since the days when Adam refused to eat from the Tree of Life.

The Kaddish is, thus, a comforting prayer, grandiose in

its spiritual conception, dramatic in its rhythms and word-music, and profound in its psychological insights.

When Mourners Console the Master

A great hasidic sage noted that the death of every one of God's creatures causes a gap in the armies of the exalted King. The Kaddish, he said, is recited in the hope that that gap will be filled. It was left to Israel's poet laureate, S. Y. Agnon, to interpret this with a beautiful analogy.

The King of Kings, Almighty God, is not like a human king. When a king of flesh and blood orders his armies into battle, he sees only the large effects, the massive logistics and the great goal. He does not know the individual men. They are not distinguishable one from the other. They are human machines that carry rifles, and perform a function. If he loses half a regiment, he sincerely regrets the mass death. But he mourns no individual human being.

Not so is the King of Kings. He is Master of the world, yet he cares for each individual life. Men are not machines or ciphers. They are human beings. When God's soldiers die He mourns, as it were, each man. When a man dies, His own Name is diminished, His own sanctity lessened. His Kingdom experiences a terrible vacancy. God suffers, as it were, just as the human mourner suffers.

When we recite the Kaddish, we offer God consolation for His loss. We say *yisgadal*: Thy name has been diminished; may it be magnified. *Yiskadash*: Thy sanctity has been lessened; may it be increased. *Yamlieh malchusai*: Thy kingdom has suffered a sudden loss, may it reign eternally.

This astonishing interpretation of the Kaddish—which sees it as the mourner's attempt to offer consolation to the Master of all men—is itself a consolation to the bereaved. The knowledge that God cares for every man, and that He suffers in the loss of every one of His creatures made in His own image, is a source of warmth and comfort.

THE KADDISH AS EDUCATION

Beneath the surface, the Kaddish declaration expresses a thought basic to an understanding of the Jewish attitude towards life: the acceptance of seemingly undeserved pain and unreasonable tragedy in life as being the just—even if paradoxical—act of an all-wise God. The Kaddish prayer is, thus, found in ancient sources bracketed with the *tziddak ha'din*, the prayer justifying God's edict. This prayer is recited at the moment of burial, and proclaims, "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken. May the name of the Lord be blessed."

The Kaddish echoes this theme: "May His great name be blessed for ever and ever." It is the spirit of recognition that Almighty God knows our innermost secrets; that He reliably and justly rewards and punishes us; that He knows what is best for mankind, and that all His doing is for the eventual benefit of the whole human race. It is only by virtue of this acceptance of death as the just and inexorable terminus of life that life can be lived to its fullest. It is only through the difficult, but necessary, acknowledgement that only the Creator of the universe understands the design of His creation, that we avoid becoming disabled by the dogged questioning of imponderables that can wear out our very existence. Thus do we recite in the words of the Kaddish, "Magnified and sanctified be His great name, in the world which He created according to His will." It is a world whose ways bypass our understanding and conform only with His will. How can our limited intellects fathom His exalted greatness or plumb the endless depths of the Divine mind? If tragedy strikes, if our families are beset by evil circumstances, we have faith that the just God has acted justly.

The Significance of Kaddish

A Reflection of Parental Esteem

The true function of the Kaddish goes even deeper. Beyond the psychological healing which it encourages, beyond educating the mourner to adjust to tragedy, is there not some mysterious influence, some wondrous power that affects so marvelously the soul of the mourner? How is the Kaddish related to mourning for parents?

Put simply: the Kaddish is a spiritual handclasp between the generations, one that connects two lifetimes. What better consolation is there for the mourner than the knowledge that the ideas and hopes and concerns and commitments of the deceased continue on in the life of his own family? The son's recitation of Kaddish represents a continuation of that life; it snatches the deepest worth of the individual from the cavernous jaws of death.

How does that happen? Jewish tradition recognizes the important influence of the father upon the son during the lifetime of the parent. The "merit of the Fathers" is a bold and important theme in rabbinic literature. It should be remembered that collectively, the Jew asks God for mercy in recognition of the righteous deeds of the patriarchs of old whose descendants we are. Tradition also recognizes that the sins of the parents—impure motives, ill-begotten wealth, purposeless living, and so on—may make themselves felt in the lives of the children for many generations. The child's psyche indelibly bears the imprint of the parent, whether we think it just or not. For all that, however, Jewish thought never considered the parent able to redeem an erring son by virtue of his own good deeds before God. Abraham could not save his wayward son, Ishmael. Isaac could not save his avaricious son, Esau.

Curiously, though, in the complicated calculus of the spirit, the reverse is possible! The deeds of the child *can* redeem the life of the parent, even after the parent's death!

It is a neat reversal, a "merit of the children." The ethical, religious and social virtues of children place haloes on their parents. The Talmud declares, *bera meakeh aba*, the son endows the father. Elsewhere, Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai says, *mah zar'o bachayim, af hu bachayim*, so long as his children live, so long does the parent live. They who leave worthy children do not die in spirit. Their mortal remains are interred in the earth, but their teachings remain among men.

While it is true that no individual can intervene with God in behalf of the life of another—neither parent for child, nor child for parent—a person may surely modify the significance of another person's life and grant it meaning and value. As the tree is judged by its fruit, and the artisan by his product, so a parent achieves personal significance by the moral success of his child. Of David, who had left a son worthy of himself, the Talmud refers to his death as he "slept," indicating the continuity of life. Of Joab, who had no son who could inherit his greatness, it says "he died," implying finality. The reflection of the child upon the parent is true in life, and it is true after death as well.

It is precisely in this regard that the Kaddish reaches its deepest value. The Kaddish serves as an epilogue to human life as, historically, it served as an epilogue to Torah study. Was that life marked primarily by goodness and dignity and nobility, or by shame and disgrace, by folly and weakness? In either case the Kaddish is effective. The sages state that the son's recitation of Kaddish confirms a parent's life of goodness on one hand, and effects repentance for a parent's life of sin, on the other.

Indeed, the rabbis declare that one is obligated to honor parents in death as well as in life. The Kaddish is the verbal demonstration of the deep and abiding honor that Jews were bidden to give parents since the day the fifth commandment was pronounced on Sinai. The very duration of the Kaddish recitation for parents is ample testimony to

that respect. Because the wicked soul is said to undergo judgment for a full year, the child, in reverence for his parent, ends the Kaddish at eleven months, bearing witness, in one month's eloquent silence, to the goodness of those who bore him.

It is not the recitation of Kaddish alone that is emblematic of the parent's teaching, but also the fact that the mourner elicits a response of holiness from others, causing others to proclaim the greatness of God with him—which the sages term, *Kiddush Ha'Shem*, sanctification of the Name. The mourner announces, "Magnified and sanctified be His great name," and his neighbors respond, "Let His great name be blessed for all eternity." The mourner continues, "Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted; extolled, honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He," and the congregation replies, "Blessed be He." The Kaddish is, thus, a public sanctification of God's name. It is a self-contained, miniature service that achieves the heights of holiness, and it is this great spiritual triumph that reflects on the life of mother and father, and confirms the correctness of their teachings.

If, on the other hand, parents have strayed or sinned, and have desecrated the name of God (*chilul ha'Shem*), the Kaddish which is the sanctification of the name, (*kiddush ha-shem*), is considered true repentance for the deceased, and it redeems them from retribution. The Kaddish is not an explicit prayer for this redemption of parents, but its recital is an indication that good has come forth from them, and it is thus redemptive.

The fundamental and most frequently recorded incident regarding Kaddish is the mystical vision of the great sage, Rabbi Akiba. This incident is found in numerous sources: the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and other literary works, which attests to its wide acceptance and its popularity. Rabbi Akiba had a vision of a well-known sinner who had died and was condemned to intolerable punishment. The sinner informed the rabbi in the vision that only if his

surviving son would recite the *Barchu* and Kaddish would he be redeemed. The rabbi proceeded to teach the youngster these prayers. When the youngster recited the Kaddish, he saved his father from perdition. The child endows the parent!

Moreover, this concept of the "merit of the children" is associated historically with the central core and response of the Kaddish. Tradition records a dialogue between the aged patriarch, Jacob, and his 12 sons. Jacob had been anxious about the future. He was not sure whether some of his children might not follow in the wicked footsteps of their uncle, Esau, or their great-uncle, Ishmael. Will one of his sons defect from the faith of his fathers? When in great consternation he confronted his sons, they declared together, "Hear O Israel (Jacob), the Lord our God, the Lord is one." With great relief at being assured of the merit of his children, Jacob responded in full gratitude, "Blessed be His name whose glorious Kingdom is forever and ever." This response has been enshrined as the verse immediately following the *Shema*, *Baruch shem k'vod malchuto le'olam va'ed*. In its Aramaic form it is almost identical with the central response of the Kaddish, *yehai shmai rabbah mevarach le'olam le'olmai olmaya*, "May His great name be blessed forever and ever." The Kaddish is a firm handclasp between the generations!

When death stalks our homes it brings an end to physical life. The current is cut off. That is all. But the spirit is mightier than the grave. The thoughts and emotions, the ideals and attitudes of the heirs attest to the undying influence of the dead. The recitation of the Kaddish is a public demonstration that a parent's life was not lived without furthering, in some sense, the cause of the good. It is no exaggeration to say that the spiritual handclasp of the Kaddish has helped assure the continued survival of the Jewish people, the Jewish religion, the synagogue and its major institutions.

8. God's decree must be accepted. To the very end we must remember that as God in His kindness was beneficent to give us this dear one and bring him into life, He is the same just God when He beckons that soul to return to him. "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken." We thank the Lord for the years that were given to us. "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

This prayer is not recited for children under 30 days of age. It is also not recited if the burial occurs at night, or if the funeral is held on one of the major festivals such as Passover, Shavuot or Succot, or on other holidays such as Hannukah, Purim, Rosh Chodesh, or on all afternoons preceding the holidays and the Sabbath, or on the days immediately following the three major festivals, as it would conflict with the spirit of joy that should obtain at these times.

The Burial

The sacred principle of the Jewish burial law which establishes that the deceased be buried in the earth, requires lowering the casket to the bottom of the grave. Leaving the casket at ground level during the service, in the company of the entourage, and then, without completing the interment, to turn one's back on the unburied casket and return home, is a distinct affront to the dead.

The minimum dimensions of the grave must provide, at least, that the opening should be as wide and as long as the casket, and at least ten *tefachim*, or forty inches deep. The use of a mechanical device to lower the casket into the grave is *not* contrary to Jewish law. It is, however, a slow process, and surely not as quick as lowering by hand. Its use, therefore, is a matter of family preference. A Jewish friend or relative should release the lever to begin the operation of the mechanism.

The grave must be filled at this time. At the very mini-

mum, the casket must be fully covered with earth to take on the form of a grave. After that, the laborers may assist in filling the grave if the others cannot perform this deed.

Some follow the practice of covering the open grave with a green, plastic, grass mat, but do not fill it with earth. This is *not* the traditional Jewish way. Indeed, it is a signal honor and duty to help in shoveling the earth to cover the casket. This duty is usually reserved for the learned in attendance, for the community leaders who are present, and also for the closest relatives and dearest friends. It is the personal "good-bye" of beloved neighbors. That this duty is a heart-breaking one is all too evident. But this spells the finality of death, and it must be faced and accepted as such.

Psychologically, the heart-rending thud of earth on the casket is enormously beneficial. In proclaiming finality, it helps the mourner overcome the illusion that his relative still lives; it answers his disbelief that death has indeed claimed its victim; it quiets his lingering doubts that this may be only a bad dream. The earth-filling process dispels such illusions and starts the mourner on the way to recovery and reconciliation. To attempt to spare him this unpleasantness merely retards the psychological healing process.

Is there a specific method of filling? The earth originally dug out should be replaced. Custom has it that the shovel should not pass from hand to hand, but each person should replace it in the earth. This is a silent, symbolic gesture expressing the prayer that the tragedy of death be not "contagious," and that the remainder of family and friends may live long and peaceful lives. The law does not stipulate how many shovelfuls should be used. Some customarily use the back of the shovel to indicate a difference from its use for other purposes.

The Kaddish

The *Burial* Kaddish is different from the other forms of Kaddish recited in the synagogue. (The *Mourner's* Kaddish

is considered in detail in a later chapter of this book.) It takes the form of a prayer, and not a formal doxology. It is, therefore, not circumscribed by all of the regulations regarding the Kaddish of the synagogue service. This is why it may be recited directly following burial, whereas the synagogue Kaddish is recited only after a portion from the Psalms or Torah is read.

The Burial Kaddish is a prayer affirming that God, in His good time, will create the world anew, and that the deceased will be raised up to everlasting life. With the advent of the new world, the Temple will be reestablished, and the true worship of the one God will replace the idols of the masses. It bespeaks the hope that there is a future for the deceased, and it gives new faith to the mourners, even as its recitation at the moment of interment evokes new tears.

The Burial Kaddish is recited after the grave is filled with earth. In cases of emergency, such as excessive grief at the time of great tragedy, or if the hour is late and the Sabbath or a holy day is approaching, it is permissible to say the Kaddish after the casket is fully covered with a layer of earth. In such case it is not necessary to wait for the grave to be completely filled.

The Burial Kaddish is omitted on festivals and during "joyous celebrations" (which is defined later) when *tachanun* is not recited in the synagogue. At such times, Psalm 16 is recited and the traditional Mourner's Kaddish is said. The special Burial Kaddish is replaced by the Mourner's Kaddish if no mourners are present. Kaddish is not recited at all when the grave cannot be filled in the presence of a *minyán*.

Recessional from the Gravesite

The purpose of the recessional is to redirect our sympathies and concerns from the deceased to the mourners. It marks the transition from *aminut to aveilut*, the new state

of mourning which now commences. The theme changes from honoring of the dead to comforting the survivors. To act out this transition, those present form parallel lines, facing one another. The mourners solemnly pass through as they come away from the site of their bereavement. As the mourners walk by, those present recite words of comfort: *Ha'makom yenachem ei'chem b'toch she'ar avelei tziyon vi'Yerushalayim*, "May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." If no mourners are present, the parallel lines are dispensed with, as words of comfort are obviously out of place. A beautiful Israeli custom has the mourners place a stone on the covered grave and ask forgiveness for any injustice they may have committed against the deceased.

Washing of the Hands

After the funeral, those in attendance wash their hands. This is symbolic of the ancient custom of purification, performed after contact with the dead. It emphasizes the Jew's constant concern with life, its value and dignity, rather than over-zealous attention to, and worship of, the dead. The washing is done upon returning from the cemetery, before entering the home, or, if this is not feasible, at the cemetery office itself. It is performed with a cup of water poured alternately on both hands. As with the shovel, at the filling of the grave, the cup is not passed from hand to hand.

The Cemetery Plot and Grave

The Gravesite: Purchasing a Plot

It is an ancient Jewish custom to purchase a gravesite during one's lifetime and to own it outright prior to burial. The Bible states explicitly that Abraham bought a grave for Sarah. Likewise, Joseph was buried in the family plot that his father Jacob had acquired in the city of Shechem.

Station One

K'riah: Tearing of Garments

Keriah is a Hebrew word meaning "tearing" and refers to a ritual in which clothing or a black ribbon is cut or torn as a sign of mourning. Orthodox Jews formerly "cut *keriah*" at one of two times, either at the moment of death or at the time of the funeral. Today, all Jews generally cut *keriah* just prior to the funeral service.

The custom derives from a number of biblical stories in which rending one's garments reflected grief and anguish. Over time, the custom attained the force of law:

- a. Jacob, on hearing of Joseph's supposed death (Genesis 37:34)
- b. David, when told of Saul's death in battle (II Samuel 1:11)
- c. King David and his servants, in mourning for David's son Absalom (II Samuel 3:31)
- d. Job, grieving for his children (Job 1:20)

Only those in the immediate family of the deceased cut *keriah*. In Orthodoxy, only one's actual clothes may be used, a coat or dress. The tear in the garment is never sewn, symbolic of the permanent tear in our lives which the death of a loved one brings. Liberal Jews will often use a black ribbon provided by the funeral home in place of clothing.

Keriah is always performed standing, just as Job "stood up and rent his clothes" when his children died. (Job 1:20) A cut is made on the left side, closest to the heart, for parents, and on the right side for all others. If *keriah* is performed at the moment of death, before the garment or ribbon is cut, the immediate family recites *Dayan ha'emet*.

If, as is now almost universal custom *keriah* is performed prior to the funeral service, a full *beracha* is recited: *Baruch atah Adonai, Elohenu Melech ha'olam Dayan ha'emet*. "Blessed are you, O God, Ruler of the universe, the true judge."

A pragmatic reason for *keriah* is advanced by one authority. Taking into account the shock experienced by the mourner upon learning of the death of his relative, in order to divert his grief and his thoughts of the dead, he is asked to rend his clothes.

Danny Syme
Jewish Home

Station Two

El Maleh Rachamim

El Maleh Rachamim means "God, full of compassion" and refers to a prayer offered at the conclusion of the service at a chapel or synagogue, and/or just before the Kaddish if the funeral is held at graveside. The prayer asks God to give rest to the soul of the deceased and includes the deceased's Hebrew name.

The *El Maleh Rachamim* is a late addition to the funeral liturgy. Though no one knows for certain when it was written, it is usually traced to the seventeenth century, and it has become a standard part of all Jewish funeral services.

Memorial Prayer for all departed

אל מלא רחמים שוכן בפרומים המצא מנוחה
נכונה על כנפי השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים
בוהר הרקיע מזהירים את נשמות הישרים והישרות
שהלכו לעולמם. בעבור שאנו נודרים לאדוקה בעד
הזכרת נשמותיהם. בנן עדן תהא מנוחתם. לכן בעל
הרחמים יסתירם בסתר כנפיו לעולמים ויצרור
בצרור החיים את נשמותיהם. יי הוא נחלתם. וינחזו
בשלוש על משכבותם. ונאמר אמן:

O merciful God who dwells on high and are full of compassion, grant perfect rest beneath the shelter of Your divine presence among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness of the firmament, to our dear departed who have gone to their eternal home. May their souls be bound up in the bonds of eternal life. Grant that their memories ever inspire us to noble and consecrated living. Amen.

Station Three

Hesped: Eulogy

It is regarded as unnatural not to weep for the dead. "My son," says Ben Sira, "Let thy tears fall over the dead, and as one that suffereth grievously begin lamentation....Make bitter weeping and make passionate wailing, and let thy mourning be according to his desert, for one day or two, lest thou be evil spoken of; and so be comforted for thy sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 38:16-18). The Bible also records David's moving eulogies when he mourned over Saul, Jonathan, and Abner. There were even professional mourners whose bitter lamentations were an example for other mourners. "Call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for the wise women, that they may come" (Jeremiah 9:16). Often they used a set refrain "Alas, my brother!" or "Ah, Lord!" (I Kings 12:30; Jeremiah 34:5).

The Hebrew word *hesped* means "mourning," while the Greek-derived eulogy means "praise." Both refer to a tribute to the deceased, delivered during the funeral service. The *hesped* is an old and venerated Jewish custom, dating as far back as talmudic times. Its purpose is threefold:

- a. To capture briefly, in a uplifting manner, the life and major accomplishments of the deceased.
- b. To pay honor in this manner to the memory of the deceased.
- c. To bring comfort to the family and friends who are present.

The eulogy is usually offered by the rabbi, who spends time with the family prior to the service and becomes acquainted with the life of the deceased through the eyes of those who knew and loved him or her best.

Most rabbis feel that their task is to say what the members of the family would say were they speaking. Accordingly, a eulogy will often contain anecdotes, reminiscences, and occasionally even humorous recollections shared by the family.

It is not uncommon today for a member of the family to speak instead of or in addition to the rabbi. This tribute may be a speech, a poem, or a reading of something written by the deceased. The great Jewish poet Chaim Nachmun Bialik, for example, wrote a poem entitled "When I Am Dead":

*When I am dead, thus shall you mourn me;
There was a man, and see he is no more;
Before his time has come, did this man die;
And his life's song was hushed before it ended.
And woe, and woe, yet one more song,
One more song he had within him,
And lost forever is that song unsung.
Forever lost, forever lost.*

Station Four

Kaddish

The *Kaddish* is a prayer said in memory of loved ones who have died. But it does not mention anything about death or dying. It is a prayer of praise to God. Although we are not really sure how this prayer came to be associated with mourning, we believe that it probably happened in the following way.

In ancient times when a scholar died, other scholars honored his memory by gathering in his home to study the Torah. It was the custom in those days to end every session of Torah study by reciting the *Kaddish* as a way of praising God and expressing gratitude for the Torah. But this custom discriminated against those who were not considered scholars. When the people in the community saw that there was no gathering in the home of a person who had died, they knew that he had been an ignorant man. He would be looked down upon and his family would be shamed. In order not to embarrass the families of those who had not been scholars, it soon became the custom to study Torah and recite the *Kaddish* in every house of mourning.

Unlike most of the prayers in the Siddur, the *Kaddish* is in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. Aramaic is written in Hebrew letters and was the everyday language of the Jews when the prayer was written. Some of the words are the same as Hebrew words and others are very similar. If you know the root letters of a Hebrew word family, you can sometimes figure out the general meaning of some of the Aramaic words. See if you can find words in the *Kaddish* that are in the following families:

Kaddish is an Aramaic word meaning "sanctification." It is derived from the Hebrew word *kodesh* ("holy"), which is also the root of the Hebrew words *Kiddush* ("blessing over the wine") and *Kedushah* ("the sanctification in the Amidah), and the Aramaic word *Kiddushin* ("the wedding service"). There are many forms of the *Kaddish*, only one of which is the mourner's *Kaddish*.

The *Kaddish* is a prayer which praises God, expresses the hope that the messianic kingdom will come soon, and earnestly asks God to bring peace to the world.

Jewish law requires the recitation of the mourner's *Kaddish* for parents, spouses, siblings, and children. For parents, *Kaddish* is to be recited daily for eleven months following burial. For all other relatives, the *Kaddish* is recited for thirty days, the period known as *sheloshim*.

Mourners

יְהוָה רַבָּה וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ. וְיִסְתַּדֵּן מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּתַיְכּוֹן וּבְיַמֵּיכּוֹן וּבְתַנּוּ
דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָא קַרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

דְּאִסְתִּין בְּעַלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְתַיִים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Mourners' Kaddish

יְהוָה רַבָּה וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ. וְיִסְתַּדֵּן מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּתַיְכּוֹן וּבְיַמֵּיכּוֹן וּבְתַנּוּ
דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָא קַרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Congregation and Mourners

יְהֵא שְׁמַיָּא רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמַיָּא:

Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash sh'may rabah,
B'al-mah dee vra hir-u-tay, v'yam-leeh mal-hu-tay,
B'ha-yay-hon uv-yo-may-hon, uv-ha-yay d'hol bayt yis-ra-el,
Ba-ah-ga-lah u-veez-man ka-reev, v'eem-ru ah-mein.

Y'hay sh'may ra-bah m'vo-rah, l'o-lam ul-al-may ol-ma-yah.

Yit-ba-rah v'yish-ta-bah v'yit-po-ar v'yit-ro-mam v'yit-nah-say,
V'hit-ha-dar v'yit-ah-leh v'yit-ha-lal sh'may dikud-shah, b'rich hu;
L'ay-lah (ul-ay-lah) min kol bir-ha-tah v'shee-rah-tah,
Toosh-b'hah-tah v'neh-heh-mah-tah, da-a-mee-ron b'ol-mah v'eem-ru ah-mein.

Y'hay sh'lah-mah ra-bah min sha-ma-yah, v'ha-yeem ah-lei-nu v'al kol yis-ra-el,
v'eem-ru ah-mein.

O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav hu ya-a-seh sha-lom, ah-lei-nu v'al kol yis-ra-el,
v'eemru ah-mein.

May the great name of God be honored throughout the world which God has created according to God's will. May God soon establish God's kingdom on earth, even in our own lifetime and in the lifetime of our people so that God may rule over us all; and let us say, Amen.

May God's great name be praised for ever and ever.

Exalted and honored by the name of the Holy One, praised be God whose glory is far above all the hymns of praise which man can offer; and let us say, Amen.

May the prayers of our people Israel be acceptable unto God in heaven; and let us say, Amen.

May heavenly God grant life and peace to us and to all our people; and let us say, Amen.

May God who makes peace in the heavens grant peace to us and to all our people; and let us say, Amen.

Station Five

Memorial Light

It was a well-established practice to have a candle or lamp burning in the home throughout the twenty-four hours of the anniversary of the death of a departed parent or relative, although no authority for this is found in the Talmud or *Midrash*.

Many reasons for the custom have been suggested. Light, for instance, symbolizes the soul and suggests immortality. "The soul of man," says the Book of Proverbs, "is the lamp of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27). Also, the mystics have pointed out that the numerical value of the letters of the Hebrew phrase *ner daluk* (a kindled light) and the Hebrew word *Ha-Shechinah* (the Divine Presence) both add up to 390.

Candles always are part of special events such as Shabbat, holidays, Brits, and weddings. During Shivah, the seven days following the funeral, the candle is lit not in celebration but in remembrance of a human being. The wick is the body and the flame the soul or spirit. The soul, like a flame, brings light into darkness.

***APPENDIX VI:
TEACHER RESOURCES***

*Witness to The Holocaust: Michael Berenbaum
HarperCollins, New York, 1997*



CHRONOLOGY

1933

Adolph Hitler and Franklin Roosevelt both came to office in 1933 to lead nations uncertain of their future.

In his inaugural address, President Roosevelt told the American people: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

Jews in Germany were soon to learn the meaning of fear.

Within Hitler's first month:

Freedom of speech was suspended.

Freedom of assembly was restricted.

Freedom of the press was ended.

Hitler came to power legally. Violence and terror, which had paved the way for his rise, intensified when Hitler became chancellor.

On April 1, 1933, Jewish businesses and offices throughout Germany were boycotted. The attack against Jews had begun.

On April 7, Jews were expelled from the Civil Service.

On May 10, 1933, Nazi students stormed universities, libraries, and bookstores throughout Germany. Hundreds of thousands of books were cast onto bonfires. Some of these books were by Jewish authors. Most were not.

Opposite the main entrance to Berlin University, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels triumphantly proclaimed: "The age of a hairsplitting Jewish intellectualism is dead . . . The past lies in the flames."

A century earlier, Heinrich Heine, a German poet of Jewish origin, had prophesied: "Where one burns books, one will, in the end, burn people."

It took only eight years.

1934

Nazi rule was consolidated and the policies that formed the basis of the German persecution of the Jews were implemented. A stunned Jewish community began the process of adjustment.

As the year begins Germany and Poland signed a ten-year nonaggression pact. An altered curriculum in Jewish schools was designed to nurture both the Jewish and German spirits. Palestine, the Hebrew language, and physical fitness were stressed as never before.

Before the spring semester concluded, non-Aryan medical students were prohibited from taking state medical examinations, and Jewish students in Germany could not receive tuition exemptions.

In June, Hitler ordered SS Chief Heinrich Himmler to purge the SA (stormtroopers) leadership including his closest ally, SA leader Ernst Röhm, in what became known as the "Night of the Long Knives."

By midsummer the commandant of Dachau concentration camp was named inspector of concentration camps and commander of SS guard units, and Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss was killed in a failed attempt by Nazis to seize power in Austria.

In August, the German president, Paul von Hindenburg, died; Hitler's dictatorship was firmly set in place.

Within three weeks all officials and soldiers in the Armed Forces had to swear allegiance to Hitler personally, not to the people or the fatherland.

At the September Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, Hitler's oratorical powers were on display as he spoke to two hundred thousand political leaders. He proclaimed that the National Socialist Revolution was completed and Germany would not experience another one for the next thousand years.

By December, Bavarian Justice Minister Hans Frank was named to Hitler's cabinet and assigned to bring German law into line with Nazi ideology, to align individuals and institutions with Nazi goals.

1935

At the annual Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, September 1935, the German parliament decreed the two laws that became the centerpiece of its anti-Jewish legislation: The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor and the Reich Citizenship Law.

Citizenship in the Reich was restricted to persons of "German or kindred blood." Only citizens—i.e., racial Germans—had full civil and political rights. Jews could no longer be citizens, merely state subjects.

"To protect German blood and honor" marriages and sexual relations between Jews and "citizens of German or related blood" were prohibited as was the employment of women under the age of forty-five in Jewish households.

Categorization had consequences. Definition was the first step toward destruction.



For the first time in history Jews were persecuted not for the religion they practiced or the beliefs they affirmed, but for the blood of their grandparents.

Thus, under these decrees, Roman Catholic priests and nuns and Protestant pastors who had (or whose parents had) converted to Christianity lost their rights because they were Jews.

Later, the Nazi's imposed the Nuremberg Laws upon the lands they occupied. These regulations served as a "model" for the Nazi's treatment of Gypsies.

1936

The Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 forced Germany to mute some external manifestations of anti-Semitism in an effort to avoid a Western [American] boycott of the games. Hitler was determined to use the games as a means of enhancing his international prestige and his hold on the German people. Still, in March, German forces entered the Rhineland, which had been declared a demilitarized zone and placed under the French sphere of influence in the Treaty of Versailles; the French did not react.

In early May, Ethiopia was attacked and swiftly surrendered to Italy.

In June, Hitler named Heinrich Himmler SS chief and chief of German Police. He swiftly reorganized his empire into the Main Office of the Regular Police (Ordnungspolizei, or Orpo), and the Main Office of the Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei, or Sipo). Orpo comprised uniformed urban, municipal, and rural police. Sipo consisted of the Gestapo and the Criminal Police (Kriminalpolizei, or Kripo). Each were linked directly to the party, each would play an important role in the Holocaust.

In July, Sachsenhausen concentration camp was established in Germany. Karl Koch was appointed camp commandant. The first fifty prisoners were interned in the camp.

The summer Olympic Games were a smashing success, a propaganda victory for Adolf Hitler despite the four gold medals of American track star Jesse Owens. Marty Glickman and Sam Stollar, two Jewish-American Olympic stars, were benched by U.S. Olympic president Avery Brundage rather than further embarrass Hitler.

Before the school year began, non-Aryan teachers were forbidden to teach and Jews were not to be used as teachers even in private instruction.

By mid-fall, the Berlin-Rome Axis agreement was signed by Hitler and Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

The sting of German anti-Semitism is felt even in Warsaw, where the Jewish communal organization, the Kehilla was dissolved for opposing the Polish government's anti-Jewish policies. An appointed commissioner and advisory council were imposed on the community and boycotted by Jewish leadership.

In December the Nuremberg Laws were expanded; a German married to a non-Aryan could not salute the Nazi flag. By the end of the year, the temporary respite was over and the anti-Semitic campaign continued unabated.

1937

In retrospect 1937 appeared as a year of quiet before the storm. In the spring, Pope Pius XI issued the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (With Burning Concern), a statement against racism and extreme nationalism. Shortly thereafter, Jews in Germany were prohibited from giving testimony in courts of law.

In July, a concentration camp at Buchenwald was opened and Karl Koch, commandant of Sachsenhausen concentration camp, was transferred to the new camp.

Nazi anti-Semitism spread to neighboring countries. Attacks on Jews by Poles took place throughout Poland in July; 350 such attacks were recorded.

By the fall, anti-Jewish violence broke out in the Free City of Danzig (a League of Nations-declared international city, between Germany and Poland), directed mainly against Jewish traders and shopkeepers.

Regulations against Jews intensified. Jewish women were arrested for violations of the Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor which prohibited sexual relations between Germans and Jews. They were sent to concentration camps. By the fall, the German Justice Ministry issued a decree prohibiting Jews from giving the "Nazi salute."

The Interior Ministry decreed that Jews must carry special identity cards when traveling in Germany. The Reich Representation of German Jews (*Reichsvertretung*) publicly summoned the Jews of Germany to demonstrate resoluteness and self-confidence. Such confidence would be shaken in 1938.

In November, Germany and Japan signed a military and political pact. Their alliance was to endure.

1938

Jewish life in Germany came to an end in 1938, so too, the possibility that Germany could be rid of Jews by forced emigration.

On March 12, 1938, Germany entered Austria. Welcomed by the native population, Austria was incorporated into the Reich.

For Jews the annexation spelled doom. The Nazis accomplished within a year what, in Germany, they had failed to achieve in five years—total exclusion from society.

In the five years between 1933–38, more than 150,000 Jews had emigrated from Germany. In one night, 185,000 Jews were added to the Reich's population.

In July, representatives from thirty-two countries gathered at Evian, France for a conference on the Jewish problem convened by President Roosevelt. Pious pronouncements, fancy speeches, but no action resulted.

The United States refugee quotas were rigidly enforced. Britain was unwilling to change its restrictive immigration policies. French transit camps were set up to contain the refugees.

The Germans concluded: "We wanted to get rid of our Jews but the difficulties lay in the fact that no country wished to receive them."



Neutral Switzerland asked that passports of Jews in Germany be marked with the letter J for "Jude."

In November the situation grew more ominous.

On November 9, violence erupted throughout the Reich. Within forty-eight hours, approximately 1,300 synagogues were burned, along with their Torah scrolls, Bibles, and prayer books; 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps; 7,000 businesses were smashed and looted; 236 Jews were killed. Jewish cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and homes were destroyed.

In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, Jews were without illusions. Jewish life in the Reich was no longer possible.

1939

In a speech to the Reichstag on his sixth anniversary in office, the Führer predicted: "The consequence will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

The British restricted emigration to Palestine.

A piece of paper with a stamp on it was the difference between life and death.

The United States closed its doors to Jewish refugees. The Wagner-Rogers Bill to admit ten thousand refugee children died in Congress.

In May, the S.S. *St. Louis* set sail for Cuba with 936 passengers, most of them Jews. The Cuban government refused to honor their visas.

The captain appealed without avail to the United States for a haven. As the ship sailed off the Miami coast, Coast Guard ships patrolled the waters. The ship returned to Europe.

On September 1, Germany invaded Poland. World War II began. The war was needed, Hitler argued, for *Lebensraum*, living space for the German nation.

More than two million Jews came under Nazi control in September. They were held captive, awaiting a solution more drastic than forced emigration.

Mass murder also began in 1939—not of Jews, but of handicapped and retarded Germans, embarrassments to the master race.

The first killings were by starvation, then injections. Gassing soon became the preferred method of killing. Crematoria were built. Doctors were in charge.

These physicians soon "graduated" at Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz.

1940

On April 9, 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway.

On May 10, German armies approached France through Belgium and the Netherlands in a blitzkrieg, a lightning war. Netherlands and Belgium were conquered. The French Army retreated. On June 10, Paris fell.

Throughout western Europe, the Nazis followed a familiar pattern: Jews were defined, businesses were confiscated, Jews were segregated, marked, and barred from public schools and public places.

In Poland the situation was even more ominous. Within weeks of the Nazi conquest of Poland, Jews were forced to wear the yellow stars. Soon their movements were restricted, local Jewish Councils—*Judenrat*—were formed as instruments of German control.

In 1940, the ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz were sealed. Guards were posted at entrances and exits. Permission forms were required to enter or to leave. These areas were euphemistically called “Jewish residential quarters.”

Moving into ghettos was chaotic. In Lodz an area housing sixty-two thousand Jews was set aside as the ghetto. One hundred thousand more Jews had to move into these crowded quarters from other sections of the city. In Warsaw, the ghetto decree was announced on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. The Warsaw Ghetto contained 30 percent of the city’s population on 2.4 percent of the land—an average of 9.2 people per room.

Unlike the earlier ghettos which were permanent, the ghettos in Poland were viewed by the Nazis as a transitional measure. Worse was sure to follow.

1941

The mass murder of Jews began in 1941. On June 21, the German Army invaded Soviet territory; mobile killing units were dispatched on special assignment to kill Jews.

The invasion was followed immediately by the roundup of Jews, Jews but not only Jews; Communists, Gypsies, political leaders, and the intelligentsia were also killed. Those rounded up were marched to the outskirts of the city where they were shot. Their bodies were buried in mass graves—large ditches were filled with bodies of people who had been shot one by one and buried layer upon layer.

Frequently, local pogroms were encouraged especially in Lithuania and Latvia. Auxiliary police comprised of local natives became indispensable. Collaborators volunteered.

On September 19 the German Army captured Kiev. Days later, Kiev’s Jews were marched to Babi Yar, two miles from the city center.

Forced to strip, their clothing was gathered and folded. Rings were ripped from fingers of the naked.

Jews were then shot. The dead fell into the ravine. The sounds could be heard in Kiev.

In the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, 33,771 Jews were killed at Babi Yar. And Babi Yar was but one example of the Einsatzgruppen’s work.

Before this phase of the killing ended, more than 1.2 million Jews were killed. Yet a new stage of mass killing was only beginning.

In September, there were experiments at Auschwitz with gas chambers and Cyclon-B.



By December 8 actual gassing of Jews had begun in mobile vans at Chelmno death camp. Stationary gas chambers were being erected at Auschwitz and Belzec.

1942

If the Holocaust was a long, seemingly unrelenting journey into darkness, 1942 was the heart of that darkness.

In January 1942, Reinhard Heydrich convened a meeting at a Wannsee Villa. He invited fifteen colleagues, the Reich's best and brightest. More than half of them held advanced degrees from prominent German universities. He announced a change in policy from emigration "to Evacuation to the East," merely a provisional plan for the future "Final Solution to the Jewish problem."

"Evacuation to the East" was a euphemism for concentration camps; "the Final Solution" was systematic murder. The prototypes had already been tested, mobile killing units, gas vans, even plans for Cyclon-B in stationary gas chambers.

The full implications of Wannsee were shown in 1942. During the winter and spring the killing centers of Aktion Reinhard were created—Sobibor, Belzec, Treblinka. They joined Auschwitz, Chelmno, and Majdanek as the six death camps, the Nazi killing centers.

Until 1942, the killers were sent to the victims—after Wannsee the victims were sent to the killers—deportation to death.

In the summer, the ghettos of Poland were emptied. On July 23, the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the first and second Temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E., deportations began from Warsaw to Treblinka. The ghetto was emptied block by block, building by building. On August 6, 1942, the Nazis struck against the children's institutions in the ghetto. By September, 310,000 Jews from Warsaw had been sent to Treblinka where they were soon gassed; 850,000 Jews were to be killed at Treblinka during the eighteen months it operated.

In early September 1942, the Nazis demanded that all children and old people in the Lodz ghetto be surrendered. Ghetto leader Mordecai Rumkowski complied. "The decree cannot be revoked. It can only be slightly lessened by our carrying it out calmly," he said. In a public speech, he pleaded: "Brothers and sisters, hand them over to me. Fathers and mothers, give me your children."

Throughout the warm summer days and the cool days of autumn, train after train from ghetto after ghetto arrived at the death camps. At Majdanek and Auschwitz there was a *selection*—the old, the infirm and children, mothers and their children were sent to the gas chambers. The able-bodied were to work for a while. At the Aktion Reinhard death camps, the fate of all was equal. There was no reprieve even for those who could work.

And in August, at the height of the deportations from Warsaw, word of the Final Solution reached the United States.

Dr. Gerhart Riegner, the World Jewish Congress representative in Bern, Switzerland, sent a

secret cable on August 11, 1942, through secure channels to the State Department and to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, president of the World Jewish Congress, informing them:

that there has been and is being considered in Hitler's headquarters a plan to exterminate all Jews from Germany and German-controlled areas in Europe after they have been concentrated in the East. The numbers involved is said to be between three and a half and four million and the object to permanently settle the Jewish question in Europe.

The State Department did not pass on the telegram to Rabbi Wise until he inquired, and when they did they asked him to remain silent until the information could be confirmed. In November, they "regretfully confirmed his darkest fear."

1943

The violence unleashed in the first two years of the Final Solution intensified in 1943.

The Warsaw Ghetto was obliterated after a month of fierce fighting. The ghetto was burned to the ground, block by block, building by building. Mordecai Anielewicz, commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) writes to his colleague, "My life's dream has been realized: I have lived to see Jewish defense in the ghetto in all its greatness and glory."

General Jurgen Stropp wrote to his superiors: "The Jewish Residential Quarter of Warsaw is no longer." In desperation Samuel Zygelbojm, a Jewish representative of the Polish government-in-exile, committed suicide in solidarity with the fighters and to protest the world's silence.

Warsaw was the first ghetto to rise in resistance. By year's end—and on the edge of destruction—Vilna and Bialystock were also to have mass armed public resistance. In August, even in the death camp of Treblinka, the inmates rose in resistance. In the fall, some three hundred Sobibor inmates escaped after a brief resistance. At Janowska labor and extermination camp, a revolt broke out among the Sonderkommando 1005, who had the task of collecting and cremating the bodies of victims. Several camp guards were killed and dozens of prisoners escaped; the majority were caught and shot.

Yet by the time of the revolt, the work of Treblinka and of Sobibor were completed, and the Jews of Poland were decimated. Vilna, Bialystock, and Warsaw were at the end, facing "final liquidation."

It was a year of deportations: the ghettos of Poland were emptied, Jews were deported from Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, and Yugoslavia.

On Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the order was given to deport the Jews of Denmark, but the Danish population would not consent. In a series of clandestine operations, the Jews of Denmark were ferried to freedom in Sweden.

Bulgaria also protected *its* Jews, but willingly ceded the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia.

One after another, mobile killing units reported their great achievements. In the East, the Jews had been annihilated. A special operation was then launched to dig up the bodies

that had been buried in mass graves and to burn them; thus to leave no physical evidence of the crime.

U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at Casablanca in early winter; the unconditional surrender of Germany was declared a war aim.

The tide of war had shifted after the German Army surrendered to the Red Army at Stalingrad. Allied forces invaded Sicily. For a time, Benito Mussolini fell from power in Fascist Italy.

1944

By the beginning of 1944, one could see the end of the Third Reich. German defeat was inevitable. The Red Army was advancing in the East, the Allies were marching through Italy. The killing of Jews went on unabated, its pace quickened by the looming end.

The United States began its belated rescue efforts only in January 1944 when Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau presented President Roosevelt with decisive new evidence of governmental inaction that Roosevelt knew would be politically explosive if it became public. So the War Refugee Board was established in response to revelations that the United States government had covered up its knowledge of the murder of Jews and actively prevented efforts that might have rescued them.

In March 1944, Germany occupied its ally Hungary. In sixty days, Hungarian Jewry replicated the fate of the Jews of Europe—definition, confiscation of property and possessions, the yellow star, ghettoization, and deportation. Between May 14 and July 8, 437,402 Jews were deported to Auschwitz on 148 trains. Hungary was without Jews, except for the Jews of Budapest.

The War Refugee Board sought international help in an attempt to protect Hungarian Jews. Overtures were made to neutral countries, the Vatican, and the International Red Cross. Only Sweden answered the call.

Raoul Wallenberg was chosen to lead the rescue operation. He was given a diplomatic passport, a large sum of money, and *carte blanche* to use whatever methods he wished, however unorthodox, to rescue Jews. He immediately began issuing Jews with impressive looking passports bearing the Swedish seal. The first batch of five thousand was only the beginning. Other neutral missions followed Wallenberg's lead.

In November, Eichmann organized a series of forced marches. He ordered the roundup of all Jewish men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. A large group of Jews was marched to the Austrian border in the first of a series of death marches. Wallenberg reacted immediately. He issued thousands of Swedish safe passes, pursued convoys carrying Jews, halted trains about to depart for Auschwitz, and roamed through the city, badgering German and Hungarian officers to release Jews in their custody.

But the War Refugee Board was only partially successful. In the summer of 1944, it asked that Auschwitz be bombed. The response from the War Department was misleading and bureaucratic. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy wrote:

such an operation could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air forces now engaged in decisive operations elsewhere and would be of such doubtful efficacy that it would not warrant the use of our resources. There has been considerable opinion to the effect that such an effort, even if practicable, might provoke even more vindictive action by the Germans.

During the summer of 1944, Soviet forces overran Belzec, Treblinka, and Sobibor, the killing centers which had been closed a year earlier when the annihilation of Polish Jews was virtually complete. The SS had burned Treblinka and turned it into a farm. At Belzec, pine trees had been planted to conceal the camp. Still, soldiers found bones protruding from the ground.

On July 23, 1944, Soviet troops arrived at the death camp of Majdanek, just outside the Polish city of Lublin. As the Red Army advanced to the outskirts of Lublin, the SS hastened to hide, bury, and burn the evidence of their crime. They simply ran out of time. When the Soviets entered they found few prisoners, but ample evidence remained, including a storehouse of eight hundred thousand shoes. And survivors ready to testify.

1945

The final year of the war was a race against time. Defeated in war, the Nazis tried to win the war against the Jews.

Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met for a final time in Yalta, in the USSR, to discuss the postwar aim of "denazifying" Germany.

In January, between ten and twenty thousand Jews of Budapest, the last Jewish community in Europe, were shot along the banks of the Danube River by Hungarian fascists. Protected Jews—Wallenberg Jews—were forced to move into the city's central ghetto. The Swedish diplomat traded food to stop the transfers and intervened to halt attempts to burn the ghetto. Tens of thousands of Jewish lives were saved. As the Soviet army entered Budapest, Wallenberg negotiated to ensure proper care of the liberated Jews. Suspected of spying, he disappeared into the Soviet gulags.

At Birkenau extermination camp, demolition squads frantically hid evidence of mass murder by dismantling crematoria and gas chambers. Storehouses and records were burned. To avoid capture of the inmates—living witnesses—sixty thousand were hastily evacuated to concentration camps in the German heartland. In the harsh Polish winter, they walked inland without food or shelter in death marches.

On January 27, Soviet forces entered Auschwitz. They found 348,820 men's suits, 836,255 woman's coats, 13,964 carpets and more than seven tons of human hair. Since 1942, between 1.1 million and 1.3 million Jews and thousands of Soviet POWs, Poles, and Gypsies were murdered there.

Liberation reveals the magnitude of the loss. In Poland, the Soviets entered Czestochowa and found 800 Jews left in Czestochowa from the city's prewar Jewish population of 28,500. In Kielce, 25 Jews were left from a prewar Jewish population of 24,000. In Kraków, only a few Jews were alive in what had once been the home of 60,000 Jews, and



in Lodz 877 Jews were found alive—800 who had been left to clean the ghetto, and 77 in hiding—from a ghetto of 164,000.

The evacuations of concentration camps continued until the end, so too the discoveries. Forty thousand prisoners were force-marched from Gross-Rosen and its satellite camps. Thousands were murdered en route; the remainder arrived at Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbug, Mauthausen, Mittelbau, and Sachsenhausen concentration camps. So too, in Neuengamme and Flossenbug, thousands of prisoners died en route.

As the Soviet army encircled Stutthof concentration camp, the Nazis began the final evacuation of the camp's forty-five hundred remaining prisoners. The prisoners were evacuated on ferryboats by way of the Baltic Sea; two hundred female Jewish prisoners were the first to be driven to the sea shore and shot. Two thousand prisoners were drowned or shot by the Nazis on the open sea.

In April, advancing American and British forces came upon the concentration camps. Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Dachau were liberated by the Americans. The British army liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and found fifty-eight thousand surviving prisoners, mostly Jews, all in critical condition. Thirteen thousand corpses are found. During the next five days, fourteen thousand prisoners died, and in the following few weeks another fourteen thousand perished.

In April Roosevelt died and Hitler committed suicide. In May, the Germans surrendered to the Allies. Nazi General Alfred Jodl signed an unconditional surrender at the headquarters of U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower.

On May 8, V-E Day, the war in Europe officially ended. Thirty million Europeans, soldiers and civilians, were casualties of World War II. Among these dead were some six million Jews, victims of the Holocaust along with millions of Soviet prisoners of war, hundreds of thousands of Gypsies, Poles, and mentally handicapped, thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and others.

The long task of rebuilding began.



**The Jewish Student Online
Research Center (JSOURCE)**

**Holocaust Glossary:
Terms, Places, and Personalities**

For additional definitions of terms related to the Holocaust, see the full JSOURCE glossary.

Aktion, Allies, Anielewicz, Anschluss, Aryan Race, Auschwitz, Axis, Baek, Belzec, Chamberlain, Chelmno, Churchill, Concentration Camps, Eichmann, Einsatzgruppen, Euthanasia, Evian Conference, Extermination Camps, Final Solution, Frank, Frick, Genocide, Gerstein, Ghetto, Göring, Greater German Reich, Grynszpan, Gypsies, Hess, Heydrich, Hitler, Holocaust, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jewish Badge, Judenrat, Judenrein, Kapo, Kristallnacht, Lidice, Lodz, Mauthausen, Majdanek, Mein Kampf, Mengele, Musselmann, Night and Fog Decree, Nuremberg Laws, Partisans, Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Rath, Righteous Among the Nations, Sa, Selection, Sobibor, Ss, St. Louis, Struma, Der Stürmer, Terezin, Treblinka, Umschlagplatz, Wannsee Conference, Wallenberg, Warsaw Ghetto, Wiesenthal.

AKTION (German)

Operation involving the mass assembly, deportation, and murder of Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

ALLIES

The nations fighting Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II; primarily the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.

ANIELEWICZ, MORDECAI (1919-1943)

Major leader of the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto; killed May 8, 1943.

ANSCHLUSS (German)

Annexation of Austria by Germany on March 13, 1938.

ARYAN RACE

"Aryan" was originally applied to people who spoke any Indo-European language. The Nazis, however, primarily applied the term to people of Northern European racial background. Their aim was to avoid what they considered the "bastardization of the German race" and to preserve the purity of European blood. (See NUREMBERG LAWS.)

AUSCHWITZ

Concentration and extermination camp in upper Silesia, Poland, 37 miles west of Krakow. Established in 1940 as a concentration camp, it became an extermination camp in early 1942. Eventually, it consisted of three sections: Auschwitz I, the main camp; Auschwitz II (Birkenau), an extermination camp; Auschwitz III (Monowitz), the I.G. Farben labor camp, also known as Buna. In addition, Auschwitz had numerous sub-camps.

AXIS

The Axis powers originally included Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan who signed a pact in Berlin on September 27, 1940. They were later joined by Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, and Slovakia.

BAECK, LEO (1873-1956)

Rabbi, philosopher, and community leader in Berlin. In 1933, he became president of the Reich Representation of German Jews, an organization responsible to the Nazi regime concerning Jewish matters. Despite opportunities to emigrate, Baeck refused to leave Germany. In 1943, he was deported to the ghetto of Terezin (Theresienstadt), where he became a member of the Council of Elders and spiritual leader of the Jews imprisoned there. After the liberation of the ghetto he emigrated to England.

BELZEC

One of the six extermination camps in Poland. Originally established in 1940 as a camp for Jewish forced labor, the Germans began construction of an extermination camp at Belzec on November 1, 1941, as part of Aktion Reinhard. By the time the camp ceased operations in January 1943, more than 600,000 persons had been murdered there.

CHAMBERLAIN, NEVILLE (1869-1940)

British Prime Minister, 1937-1940. He concluded the Munich Agreement in 1938 with Adolf Hitler, which he mistakenly believed would bring "peace in our time."

CHELMNO

An extermination camp established in late 1941 in the Warthegau region of Western Poland, 47 miles west of Lodz. It was the first camp where mass executions were carried out by means of gas. A total of 320,000 people were exterminated at Chelmno.

CHURCHILL, WINSTON (1875-1965)

British Prime Minister, 1940-1945. He succeeded Chamberlain on May 10, 1940, at the height of Hitler's conquest of Western Europe. Churchill was one of the very few Western politicians who recognized the threat that Hitler posed to Europe. He strongly opposed Chamberlain's appeasement policies.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Immediately upon their assumption of power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established concentration camps for the imprisonment of all "enemies" of their regime: actual and potential political opponents (e.g. communists, socialists, monarchists), Jehovah's Witnesses, gypsies, homosexuals, and other "asocials." Beginning in 1938, Jews were targeted for internment solely because they were Jews. Before then, only Jews who fit one of the earlier categories were interned in camps. The first three concentration camps established were Dachau (near Munich), Buchenwald (near Weimar) and Sachsenhausen (near Berlin).

EICHMANN, ADOLF (1906-1962)

SS Lieutenant-colonel and head of the "Jewish Section" of the Gestapo. Eichmann participated in the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942). He was instrumental in implementing the "Final Solution" by organizing the transportation of Jews to death camps from all over Europe. He was arrested at the end of World War II in the American zone, but escaped, went underground, and disappeared. On May 11, 1960, members of the Israeli Secret Service uncovered his whereabouts and smuggled him from Argentina to Israel. Eichmann was tried in Jerusalem (April-December 1961), convicted, and sentenced to death. He was executed on May 31, 1962.

EINSATZGRUPPEN (German)

Battalion-sized, mobile killing units of the Security Police and SS Security Service that followed the German armies into the Soviet Union in June 1941. These units were supported by units of the

uniformed German Order Police and auxiliaries of volunteers (Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian). Their victims, primarily Jews, were executed by shooting and were buried in mass graves from which they were later exhumed and burned. At least a million Jews were killed in this manner. There were four *Einsatzgruppen (A,B,C,D)* which were subdivided into company-sized *Einsatzkommandos*.

EUTHANASIA

The original meaning of this term was an easy and painless death for the terminally ill. However, the Nazi euthanasia program took on quite a different meaning: the taking of eugenic measures to improve the quality of the German "race." This program culminated in enforced "mercy" deaths for the incurably insane, permanently disabled, deformed and "superfluous." Three major classifications were developed: 1) euthanasia for incurables; 2) direct extermination by "special treatment"; and 3) experiments in mass sterilization.

EVIAN CONFERENCE (July 6, 1938)

Conference convened by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in July 1938 to discuss the problem of refugees. Thirty-two countries met at Evian-les-Bains, France. However, not much was accomplished, since most western countries were reluctant to accept Jewish refugees.

EXTERMINATION CAMPS

Nazi camps for the mass killing of Jews and others (e.g. Gypsies, Russian prisoners-of-war, ill prisoners). Known as "death camps," these included: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka. All were located in occupied Poland.

FINAL SOLUTION

The cover name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe - the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Beginning in December 1941, Jews were rounded up and sent to extermination camps in the East. The program was deceptively disguised as "resettlement in the East."

FRANK, HANS (1900-1946)

Governor-General of occupied Poland from 1939 to 1945. A member of the Nazi Party from its earliest days and Hitler's personal lawyer, he announced, "Poland will be treated like a colony; the Poles will become slaves of the Greater German Reich." By 1942, more than 85% of the Jews in Poland had been transported to extermination camps. Frank was tried at Nuremberg, convicted, and executed in

1946.

FRICK, WILHELM (1877-1946)

A dedicated Nazi bureaucrat who was appointed Minister of the Interior in 1933 where he was responsible for enacting Nazi racial laws. In 1946, he was tried at Nuremberg, convicted, and executed.

GENOCIDE

The deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group.

GERSTEIN, KURT (1905-1945)

Head of the *Waffen SS* Institute of Hygiene in Berlin. While maintaining ties with the resistance, Gerstein purchased the gas needed in Auschwitz, officially for fumigation purposes, but actually used for the killing of Jews. He passed on information about the killings to Swedish representatives and Vatican papal nuncios. Overwhelmed with remorse he hanged himself in a French jail after the war. He is the author of a widely quoted description of a gassing procedure in Belzec, protagonist of Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, and the subject of Saul Friedlander's biography, *The Ambiguity of Good*.

GHETTO

The Nazis revived the medieval ghetto in creating their compulsory "Jewish Quarter" (*Wohnbezirk*). The ghetto was a section of a city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to reside. Surrounded by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were often sealed so that people were prevented from leaving or entering. Established mostly in Eastern Europe (e.g. Lodz, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, Minsk), the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation and forced labor. All were eventually destroyed as the Jews were deported to death camps.

GÖRING, HERMANN (1893-1946)

An early member of the Nazi party, G"ring participated in Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich in 1923 (see HITLER, ADOLF). After its failure, he went to Sweden, where he lived (for a time in a mental institution) until 1927. In 1928, he was elected to the *Reichstag* and became its president in 1932. When Hitler came into power in 1933, he made G"ring Air Minister of Germany and Prime Minister of Prussia. He was responsible for the rearmament program and especially for the creation of the German Air Force. In 1939, Hitler designated him his successor. During World War II, he was virtual dictator of the German economy and was responsible for the total air

war waged by Germany. Convicted at Nuremberg in 1946, G"ring committed suicide by taking poison just two hours before his scheduled execution.

GREATER GERMAN REICH

Designation of an expanded Germany that was intended to include all German speaking peoples. It was one of Hitler's most important aims. After the conquest of most of Western Europe during World War II, it became a reality for a short time.

GRYNSZPAN, HERSHEL (1921-1943)

A Polish Jewish youth who had emigrated to Paris. He agonized over the fate of his parents who, in the course of a pre-war roundup of Polish Jews living in Germany, were deported to the Polish frontier. On November 7, 1938, he went to the German Embassy where he shot and mortally wounded Third Secretary Ernst vom Rath. The Nazis used this incident as an excuse for the *KRISTALLNACHT* (Night of the Broken Glass) pogrom.

GYPSIES

A nomadic people, believed to have come originally from northwest India, from where they immigrated to Persia by the fourteenth century. Gypsies first appeared in Western Europe in the 15th century. By the 16th century, they had spread throughout Europe, where they were persecuted almost as relentlessly as the Jews. The gypsies occupied a special place in Nazi racist theories. It is believed that approximately 500,000 perished during the Holocaust.

HESS, RUDOLF (1894-1987)

Deputy and close associate of Hitler from the earliest days of the Nazi movement. On May 10, 1941, he flew alone from Augsburg and parachuted, landing in Scotland where he was promptly arrested. The purpose of his flight has never become clear. He probably wanted to persuade the British to make peace with Hitler as soon as he attacked the Soviet Union. Hitler promptly declared him insane. Hess was tried at Nuremberg, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was the only prisoner in Spandau Prison until he apparently committed suicide in 1987.

HEYDRICH, REINHARD (1904-1942)

Former naval officer who joined the *SS* in 1932, after his dismissal from the Navy. He headed the *SS Security Service (SD)*, a Nazi party intelligence agency. In 1933-1934, he became head of the political police (*Gestapo*) and later of the criminal police (*Kripo*). He combined *Gestapo* and *Kripo* into the Security Police (*SIPO*). In

1939, Heydrich combined the *SD* and *SIPO* into the Reich Security Main Office. He organized the *Einsatzgruppen* which systematically murdered Jews in occupied Russia during 1941-1942. In 1941, he was asked by G"ring to implement a "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." During the same year he was appointed protector of Bohemia and Moravia. In January 1942, he presided over the Wannsee Conference, an meeting to coordinate the "Final Solution." On May 29, 1942, he was assassinated by Czech partisans who parachuted in from England. (For consequences of this assassination, see LIDICE).

HITLER, ADOLF (1889-1945)

Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Although born in Austria, he settled in Germany in 1913. At the outbreak of World War I, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian Army, became a corporal and received the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. Returning to Munich after the war, he joined the newly formed German Workers Party which was soon reorganized, under his leadership, as the National Socialist German Workers Party (*NSDAP*). In November 1923, he unsuccessfully attempted to forcibly bring Germany under nationalist control. When his coup, known as the "Beer-Hall Putsch," failed, Hitler was arrested and sentenced to 5 years in prison. It was during this time that he wrote *Mein Kampf*. Serving only 9 months of his sentence, Hitler quickly reentered German politics and soon outpolled his political rivals in national elections. In January 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor of a coalition cabinet. Hitler, who took office on January 30, 1933, immediately set up a dictatorship. In 1934, the chancellorship and presidency were united in the person of the *Führer*. Soon, all other parties were outlawed and opposition was brutally suppressed. By 1938, Hitler implemented his dream of a "Greater Germany," first annexing Austria; then, (with the acquiescence of the western democracies), the Sudetenland (Czech province with ethnic German concentration); and, finally, Czechoslovakia itself. On September 1, 1939, Hitler's armies invaded Poland. By this time the western democracies realized that no agreement with Hitler could be honored and World War II had begun. Although initially victorious on all fronts, Hitler's armies began suffering setbacks shortly after the United States joined the war in December 1941. Although the war was obviously lost by early 1945, Hitler insisted that Germany fight to the death. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide rather than be captured alive.

HOLOCAUST

The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete and utter annihilation. The term "Holocaust" - literally meaning "a completely burned sacrifice" - tends to suggest a sacrificial connotation to what occurred. The word *Shoah*, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

A religious sect, originating in the United States, organized by Charles Taze Russell. The Witnesses base their beliefs on the Bible and have no official ministers. Recognizing only the kingdom of God, the Witnesses refuse to salute the flag, to bear arms in war, and to participate in the affairs of government. This doctrine brought them into conflict with National Socialism. They were considered enemies of the state and were relentlessly persecuted.

JEWISH BADGE

A distinctive sign which Jews were compelled to wear in Nazi Germany and in Nazi-occupied countries. It often took the form of a yellow star of David.

JUDENRAT (PLURAL: *JUDENRÄTE*)

Council of Jewish representatives in communities and ghettos set up by the Nazis to carry out their instructions.

JUDENREIN

"Cleansed of Jews," denoting areas where all Jews had been either murdered or deported.

KAPO

Prisoner in charge of a group of inmates in Nazi concentration camps.

KRISTALLNACHT (German)

Night of the Broken Glass: pogrom unleashed by the Nazis on November 9-10, 1938. Throughout Germany and Austria, synagogues and other Jewish institutions were burned, Jewish stores were destroyed, and their contents looted. At the same time, approximately 35,000 Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. The "excuse" for this action was the assassination of Ernst vom Rath in Paris by a Jewish teenager whose parents had been rounded up by the Nazis. (see GRYNSZPAN. HERSCHEL).

LIDICE

Czech mining village (pop. 700). In reprisal for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazis "liquidated" the village in 1942. They shot the men, deported the women and children to concentration

camp, razed the village to the ground, and struck its name from the maps. After World War II, a new village was built near the site of the old Lidice, which is now a national park and memorial. (see HEYDRICH, REINHARD).

LODZ

City in western Poland (renamed Litzmannstadt by the Nazis), where the first major ghetto was created in April 1940. By September 1941, the population of the ghetto was 144,000 in an area of 1.6 square miles (statistically, 5.8 people per room). In October 1941, 20,000 Jews from Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were sent to the Lodz Ghetto. Those deported from Lodz during 1942 and June-July 1944 were sent to the Chelmno extermination camp. In August-September 1944, the ghetto was liquidated and the remaining 60,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz.

MAUTHAUSEN

A camp for men, opened in August 1938, near Linz in northern Austria, Mauthausen was classified by the SS as a camp of utmost severity. Conditions there were brutal, even by concentration camp standards. Nearly 125,000 prisoners of various nationalities were either worked or tortured to death at the camp before liberating American troops arrived in May 1945.

MAJDANEK

Mass murder camp in eastern Poland. At first a labor camp for Poles and a POW camp for Russians, it was turned into a gassing center for Jews. Majdanek was liberated by the Red Army in July 1944, but not before 250,000 men, women, and children had lost their lives there.

MEIN KAMPF (German)

This autobiographical book (***My Struggle***) by Hitler was written while he was imprisoned in the Landsberg fortress after the "Beer-Hall Putsch" in 1923. In this book, Hitler propounds his ideas, beliefs, and plans for the future of Germany. Everything, including his foreign policy, is permeated by his "racial ideology." The Germans, belonging to the "superior" Aryan race, have a right to "living space" (*Lebensraum*) in the East, which is inhabited by the "inferior" Slavs. Throughout, he accuses Jews of being the source of all evil, equating them with Bolshevism and, at the same time, with international capitalism. Unfortunately, those people who read the book (except for his admirers) did not take it seriously but considered it the ravings of a maniac. (see HITLER, ADOLF).

MENGELE, JOSEF (1911-1978?)

SS physician at Auschwitz, notorious for pseudo-medical experiments, especially on twins and Gypsies. He "selected" new arrivals by simply pointing to the right or the left, thus separating those considered able to work from those who were not. Those too weak or too old to work were sent straight to the gas chambers, after all their possessions, including their clothes, were taken for resale in Germany. After the war, he spent some time in a British internment hospital but disappeared, went underground, escaped to Argentina, and later to Paraguay, where he became a citizen in 1959. He was hunted by Interpol, Israeli agents, and Simon Wiesenthal. In 1986, his body was found in Embu, Brazil.

MUSSELMANN (German)

Concentration camp slang word for a prisoner who had given up fighting for life.

NIGHT AND FOG DECREE

Secret order issued by Hitler on December 7, 1941, to seize "persons endangering German security" who were to vanish without a trace into night and fog.

NUREMBERG LAWS

Two anti-Jewish statutes enacted September 1935 during the Nazi party's national convention in Nuremberg. The first, the Reich Citizenship Law, deprived German Jews of their citizenship and all pertinent, related rights. The second, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, outlawed marriages of Jews and non-Jews, forbade Jews from employing German females of childbearing age, and prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes, which provided the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social, and economic life. The Nuremberg Laws carefully established definitions of Jewishness based on bloodlines. Thus, many Germans of mixed ancestry, called "*Mischlinge*," faced antisemitic discrimination if they had a Jewish grandparent.

PARTISANS

Irregular troops engaged in guerrilla warfare, often behind enemy lines. During World War II, this term was applied to resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied countries.

PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION

A major piece of antisemitic propaganda, compiled at the turn of the century by members of the Russian Secret Police. Essentially adapted from a nineteenth century French polemical satire directed against

Emperor Napoleon III, substituting Jewish leaders, the Protocols maintained that Jews were plotting world dominion by setting Christian against Christian, corrupting Christian morals and attempting to destroy the economic and political viability of the West. It gained great popularity after World War I and was translated into many languages, encouraging antisemitism in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Long repudiated as an absurd and hateful lie, the book currently has been reprinted and is widely distributed by Neo-Nazis and others who are committed to the destruction of the State of Israel.

RATH, ERNST VOM (1909-1938)

Third secretary at the German Embassy in Paris who was assassinated on November 7, 1938 by Herschel Grynszpan (see GRYNSZPAN, HERSCHEL).

RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

Term applied to those non-Jews who, at the risk of their own lives, saved Jews from their Nazi persecutors.

SA (abbreviation: *Sturmabteilung*)

The storm troops of the early Nazi party; organized in 1921.

SELECTION

Euphemism for the process of choosing victims for the gas chambers in the Nazi camps by separating them from those considered fit to work (see MENGELE, JOSEF).

SOBIBOR

Extermination camp in the Lublin district in Eastern Poland (see BELZEC; EXTERMINATION CAMP). Sobibor opened in May 1942 and closed one day after a rebellion of the Jewish prisoners on October 14, 1943. At least 250,000 Jews were killed there.

SS

Abbreviation usually written with two lightning symbols for *Schutzstaffel* (Defense Protective Units). Originally organized as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. Although various SS units fought on the battlefield, the organization is best known for carrying out the destruction of European Jewry.

ST. LOUIS

The steamship St. Louis was a refugee ship that left Hamburg in the spring of 1939, bound for Cuba. When the ship arrived, only 22 of the 1128 refugees were allowed to disembark. Initially no country, including the United States, was willing to accept the others. The ship finally returned to Europe where most of the refugees were finally granted entry into England, Holland, France and Belgium.

STRUMA

Name of a boat carrying 769 Jewish refugees which left Romania late in 1941. It was refused entry to Palestine or Turkey, and was tugged out to the Black Sea where it sank in February 1942, with the loss of all on board except one.

DER STÜRMER (The Attacker)

An antisemitic German weekly, founded and edited by Julius Streicher, which was published in Nuremberg between 1923 and 1945.

TEREZIN (Czech), **THERESIENSTADT** (German)

Established in early 1942 outside Prague as a "model" ghetto, Terezin was not a sealed section of town, but rather an eighteenth-century Austrian garrison. It became a Jewish town, governed and guarded by the SS. When the deportations from central Europe to the extermination camps began in the spring of 1942, certain groups were initially excluded: invalids; partners in a mixed marriage, and their children; and prominent Jews with special connections. These were sent to the ghetto in Terezin. They were joined by old and young Jews from the Protectorate, and, later, by small numbers of prominent Jews from Denmark and Holland. Its large barracks served as dormitories for communal living; they also contained offices, workshops, infirmaries, and communal kitchens. The Nazis used Terezin to deceive public opinion. They tolerated a lively cultural life of theatre, music, lectures, and art. Thus, it could be shown to officials of the International Red Cross. Terezin, however, was only a station on the road to the extermination camps; about 88,000 were deported to their deaths in the East. In April 1945, only 17,000 Jews remained in Terezin, where they were joined by 14,000 Jewish concentration camp prisoners, evacuated from camps threatened by the Allied armies. On May 8, 1945, Terezin was liberated by the Red Army. (see BAECK, LEO).

TREBLINKA

Extermination camp in northeast Poland (see Extermination Camp).

Established in May 1942 along with the Warsaw- Bialystok railway line, 870,000 people were murdered there. The camp operated until the fall of 1943 when the Nazis destroyed the entire camp in an attempt to conceal all traces of their crimes.

UMSCHLAGPLATZ (German)

Collection point. It was a square in the Warsaw Ghetto where Jews were rounded up for deportation to Treblinka.

WANNSEE CONFERENCE (January 20, 1942)

Lake near Berlin where the Wannsee Conference was held to discuss and coordinate the "Final Solution." It was attended by many high-ranking Nazis, including Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann.

WALLENBERG, RAOUL (1912-19??)

Swedish diplomat who, in 1944, went to Hungary on a mission to save as many Jews as possible by handing out Swedish papers, passports and visas. He is credited with saving the lives of at least 30,000 people. After the liberation of Budapest, he was mysteriously taken into custody by the Russians and his fate remains unknown.

WARSAW GHETTO

Established in November 1940, the ghetto, surrounded by a wall, confined nearly 500,000 Jews. Almost 45,000 Jews died there in 1941 alone, due to overcrowding, forced labor, lack of sanitation, starvation, and disease. From April 19 to May 16, 1943, a revolt took place in the ghetto when the Germans, commanded by General Jürgen Stroop, attempted to raze the ghetto and deport the remaining inhabitants to Treblinka. The uprising, led by Mordecai Anielewicz, was the first instance in occupied Europe of an uprising by an urban population. (See ANIELEWICZ, MORDECAI).

WIESENTHAL, SIMON (1908-)

Famed Holocaust survivor who has dedicated his life since the war to gathering evidence for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals.

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